



WALKING & WORKING SURFACES

Introduction

As the seasons shift, so do the hazards on our jobsites. In the North, melting snow and slush create slippery surfaces. In the South, spring rains turn dirt paths into slick, muddy traps. Whether it's an icy step or a muddy grade, slips, trips, and falls can cause serious injuries. This morning, we're focusing on how to stay upright, aware, and injury-free when walking and working on these seasonal surfaces.

The Hazards

Slips, trips, and falls are among the leading causes of workplace injuries. This time of year, the risks are even greater because:

- **Melting snow and ice** create hidden slick spots on pavement, ladders, stairs, and scaffold access points.
- **Rain and mud** make walkways uneven, greasy, and unstable.
- **Poor drainage** leads to puddles that hide potholes or loose gravel.
- **Transition zones** between indoor and outdoor areas become especially dangerous as moisture is tracked inside.

Key Precautions

Here's how you can be proactive:

✓ Watch Your Step

- Always scan your path ahead.
- Avoid shortcuts through muddy or icy areas- use designated walkways.

✓ Wear the Right Footwear

- Use boots with slip-resistant soles.
- Inspect your footwear daily for wear or damage.

✓ Maintain 3 Points of Contact

- When using ladders or stairs, always have two hands and one foot- or two feet and one hand- making contact.

✓ Clean as You Go

- If you see water, mud, or ice, notify others and take steps to clean it or mark it off with cones or signage.

✓ Use Handrails and Guardrails

- Always use them where provided- they are there for your safety.

✓ Report Hazards Immediately

- Don't assume someone else has seen it. Whether it's a slick spot, loose board, or poorly lit stairwell, report it to your supervisor or safety lead.

Supervisor Notes

Supervisors should:

- Ensure all walking surfaces are checked during daily inspections.
- Provide temporary traction aids (sand, mats, gravel) where necessary.
- Encourage open communication about hazards and take reported concerns seriously.

5. Wrap-Up / Safety Reminder

Every step you take on the job should be a safe one. That means watching for seasonal hazards, choosing safe routes, and speaking up when something isn't right. Slips and trips may seem minor, but they can sideline even the best workers with serious injuries. Let's stay safe, stay aware, and support each other, one step at a time.

6. Discussion Questions

- Have you seen any specific slip or trip hazards on our site this week?
- What do you do when you notice a muddy or icy spot?
- Is there anything more we can do as a crew to protect each other during this wet season?