



STATE SAFETY OFFICE
HEADQUARTERS, NEW YORK ARMY NATIONAL GUARD
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SAFETY MESSAGE 22-02

February is Slip, Trips, and Falls Awareness

Slipping, tripping, and falling are common accidents in all work environments. Slips and falls account for over 8 million emergency room visits annually. They are responsible for more than 25% of all work related injuries. In 2019, 39,443 people died in falls at home and at work. A fall can end in death or disability in a split second, but with a few simple precautions, you'll be sure to stay safe at home and at work.

Hazards in the Workplace

In 2019, 880 workers died in falls, and 244,000 were [injured badly enough](#) to require days off of work. A worker doesn't have to fall from a high level to suffer fatal injuries; 146 workers were killed in falls on the same level in 2019, according to *Injury Facts*. [Construction workers](#) are most at risk for fatal falls from height – more than seven times the rate of other industries – but falls can happen anywhere, even at a "desk job." Check out [this industry profile](#) to see the most recent data on workplace injuries and deaths by occupation.

Falls are 100% Preventable

Whether working from a ladder, roof or scaffolding, it's important to plan ahead, assess the risk and use the right equipment. First, determine if working from a height is absolutely necessary or if there is another way to do the task safely.

- Discuss the task with coworkers and determine what safety equipment is needed
- Make sure you are properly trained on how to use the equipment
- Scan the work area for potential hazards before starting the job
- Make sure you have level ground to set up the equipment
- If working outside, check the weather forecast; never work in inclement weather
- Use the correct tool for the job, and use it as intended
- Ensure stepladders have a locking device to hold the front and back open
- Always keep two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand on the ladder
- Place the ladder on a solid surface and never lean it against an unstable surface
- A straight or extension ladder should be 1 foot away from the surface it rests on for every 4 feet of height and extend at least 3 feet over the top edge
- Securely fasten straight and extension ladders to an upper support

- Wear slip-resistant shoes and don't stand higher than the third rung from the top
- Don't lean or reach while on a ladder, and have someone support the bottom
- Never use old or damaged equipment; check thoroughly before use

Fall Hazards at Home

Are you a do-it-yourselfer? If you take on home improvement or other weekend projects, it's important to prepare yourself for physical exertion, especially if you've been sedentary through the winter months, and take extra precautions to prevent falls. Risky projects, like installing siding, gutters or roofs, are best left to professionals. Saving money isn't worth risking a debilitating or fatal fall. At home or at work, many of the same rules apply.

When taking on a project:

- Practice all of the ladder safety tips mentioned above
- Keep the work area clear of hazards and immediately clean up spills
- Read all instructions and safety precautions on your equipment
- Don't wear loose clothing that can get caught in equipment

We tend to think we're always safe on flat ground, but the thousands of injuries each year tell us otherwise.

- Falls are the #1 cause of death for older adults; [fall-proof your home](#)
- Keep floors and surfaces clear of clutter
- Keep file cabinets and desk drawers closed
- Keep electrical and phone cords out of traffic areas
- Install handrails on stairways
- Wear sensible footwear
- Never stand on chairs, tables or any surface with wheels
- Properly arrange furniture to create open pathways
- Maintain good lighting indoors and out

To find previously published Safety Messages go to our NYARNG Safety Website:

<http://dmna.ny.gov/safety/>

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