

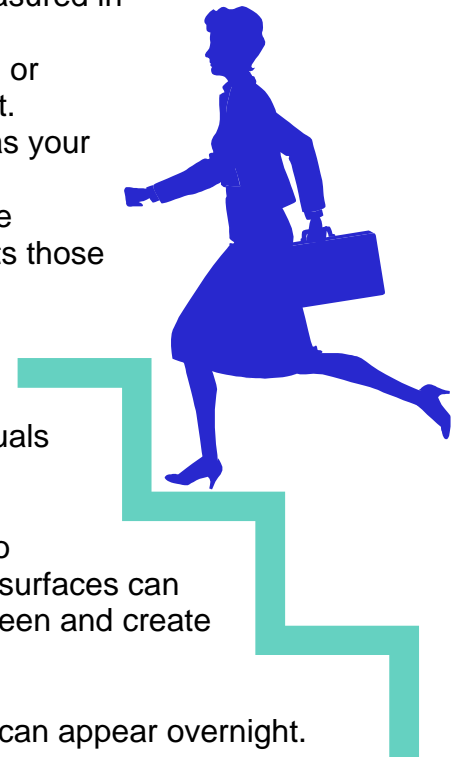
## Monthly Safety Talk

## STAIRS AND WALKWAYS



Stairways and walkways in all businesses can be the cause of injury accidents. These passageways do not typically get the maintenance they need, since they are "only" access ways and not work areas. Here are ten safety tips to help eliminate exposures in our work areas.

1. Always keep one hand free to use the handrails, both up and down the stairways.
2. Keep all stairs and walkways clear of debris and potentially slippery substances such as: ice, snow, water, oil, or grease.
3. Keep passageways free of tools, equipment and other materials. Always practice good housekeeping.
4. When walkways and stairs are provided use them. Don't short cut your safety to save a few steps or a few seconds. Hopping off loading docks or jumping over piping saves no time or money if you are injured and cannot work.
5. Shop or warehouse mezzanines should be equipped with standard railings to protect open sides. Railings should have top rails with a vertical height of 42 inches, mid rails, posts, and toe boards. Your area may have a small office located within a larger building with its roof area used for storing materials. Review the space's access and guarding. Make sure it has a full stairway or ladder access and is equipped with perimeter railings.
6. Standard handrails must be provided for stairs with four or more steps. Handrails should be 30 to 34 inches from the top of the stair tread, measured in line with the face of the riser.
7. Handrails can become loose and may need to be re-secured or replaced. Do not assume someone else will repair or report it. Immediately mention any problem to the right person, such as your supervisor.
8. Where there are elevation changes in walkways, highlight the change so it is plainly visible. Distinguishing the change alerts those unfamiliar with the walkway to the hazard.
9. Secure electrical cords and hoses so that they do not lie across walkways. If electrical cords must be laid across walkways, use approved cord covers whenever possible. Consider setting up a caution sign or flagging to alert individuals of cords or hoses in their path until a permanent "approved" solution can be put into place.
10. Take small steps on wet and icy walkways. Use handholds to stabilize yourself when they are available. Asphalt and oiled surfaces can also be hazardous because rainwater may produce an oil sheen and create slippery walking conditions.



Unlike some exposures, stairway hazards or slippery walkways can appear overnight. Take action to remedy the problem when you see it.