

12 action items to implement ahead of the May-June falls blitz

Eliminate hazards that could cause workers to slip, trip or fall - before a month-long Ministry of Labour inspection blitz begins on May 16. With assistance from WSPS consultant Shannon Boston, we've assembled a list of 12 possible action items to help you prepare for the blitz, entrench safe practices, and keep your employees healthy and safe.

What's behind the blitz

Inspection blitzes aim to prevent injuries by raising awareness of hazards and compliance requirements. In 2013 alone, 11 Ontario workers lost their lives in falls in industrial workplaces. Another 11,814 workers sustained compensable lost-time injuries due to incidents involving falls. These incidents make slip, trip and fall prevention a priority for all workplaces.

Preparing for the blitz

The suggested action items below build on practices and procedures found in most workplaces' health and safety programs. "In my experience," says Boston, "many workplaces are doing most of these things, but may not have formalized them or fully integrated them into everyday practice."

1. **Be an inspector for a day.** Step out of your role as manager, supervisor or joint health and safety committee member, and image you're seeing your workplace for the first time.
2. **Conduct a high level inspection of work areas and access areas.** Include parking lots, walkways and entrances, ramps, stairs, and steps. Look for winter damage, such as cracks and heaving from freezing and thawing. On company vehicles and equipment, inspect the grab handles, running bars, and other slip, trip and fall prevention devices.
3. **Check on whether the right controls are in place** (e.g., guardrails, secured covers on any floor openings). Do employees know how to work with the controls?
4. **Observe how people perform routine and occasional tasks** that may expose them to slips, trips and falls. Are they using 4-point mounts and dismounts from equipment (no jumping on or off) and other proper procedures? Ask questions to assess their competency, such as "What do you look for when inspecting this equipment?" Remember, you're not testing them. You're testing their training.
5. **Review your training program.** Is it up to date? Does it cover all potential slip, trip and fall hazards? Are the records current? Is it time for refresher training?
6. **Ensure housekeeping and maintenance are being performed** on an ongoing basis - floors are clear of materials and debris, equipment undergoes regular maintenance and inspections, spill kits are at hand for immediate containment.
7. **Check on whether access equipment, such as ladders, scaffolding, and elevated work platforms, is being used and maintained** according to written procedures and manufacturers' instructions.
8. **Check on whether fall protection equipment is being maintained in good condition and inspected prior to use.**
9. **Review your reporting procedures for unsafe conditions.** Are there any barriers to reporting?
10. **Deputize the joint health and safety committee** by asking it to periodically focus its monthly inspections on slip, trip and fall hazards.

11. **Launch an awareness campaign**, including posters, payroll stuffers, safety talks, demonstrations, and more.
12. **Create an implementation plan** to address any opportunities for improvement identified by your reviews.

How we can help

- Sign up today for a complimentary 1-hour live webinar, [Are You Prepared for the Ministry of Labour's Falls Blitz?](#), on Thursday, May 12.
- WSPS has all the resources and expertise you need to review, implement or upgrade your slip trip and fall prevention program. Check out our full range of [downloads, training courses, and consulting services](#), or speak with a consultant. Call WSPS Customer Care at 1-877-494-WSPS (9777).
- At [Partners in Prevention 2016 Health & Safety Conference & Trade Show](#), April 26-27 in Mississauga, ON,
 - attend this session - Working at Heights: How to Establish or Improve a Rescue Plan
 - check out trade show exhibitors with expertise in slip, trip and fall prevention, including the At Heights with Honeywell pavilion

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