

SafetyNet Talk – Stair and Walkways

Department: _____

Location: _____

Date: _____

Instructor: _____

Stairways and walkways are a cause of injuries, sometimes including the need for surgery (i.e. fractures). Staircases are not typically considered by people as dangerous but falling down a flight of stairs or just a few steps can indeed be dangerous. Review the following safety tips to help reduce your risk of injury.

1. Be alert, being distracted due to conversations, reading material while ascending or descending stairs can cause you to misstep and fall down a stairway
2. Do not look at or use your cell phone on stairways
3. Take your time ascending or descending staircases, and one step at a time, rushing causes injuries, sometimes serious
4. Carrying bicycles up and down staircases to your office or lab is not acceptable, an injury waiting to happen
5. If carrying objects which could block your view of the steps use an elevator instead if one is available
6. Always keep one hand free to use the handrails, both up and down the stairways.
7. Keep all stairs and walkways clear of debris and potentially slippery substances such as: water, oil, or grease.
8. If you see the 'nosing' of the stairs has lost a lot of it's frictional (non-slip) resistance report it to your safety coordinator or supervisor
9. EH&S can come out a measure the frictional resistance of stairs and walkways
10. Keep walkways free of tools, equipment and other materials. Always practice good housekeeping in these areas.
11. 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 objects saves no time or money if you are injured and cannot work.
12. Mezzanines must have standard guard railings to protect open sides. Guard rails must have top rails with a vertical height of 42-45 inches, mid rails at the halfway point (no gap >19 inches), posts, and possibly toe boards. Make sure other spaces with stairway or ladder access are equipped with perimeter guard rails.
13. Standard handrails must be provided for stairs with four or more steps. Handrails must be 30 to 34 inches from the top of the stair tread, measured in line with the face of the riser.
14. Staircases greater than 64 inches must have two handrails
15. Handrails can become loose and may need to be re-secured or replaced. Do not assume someone else will repair or report it. Immediately report it to your safety coordinator or your supervisor.
16. 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.
17. 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.
18. Take small steps on wet walkways. Use handholds to stabilize yourself when they are available. Asphalt and oiled surfaces can also be hazardous because rain water may produce an oil sheen and create slippery walking conditions.

