

## Low Level Falls

There are stringent fall protection requirements anytime that you are working at heights greater than 6 feet. However, only a fraction of all falls occurs from elevated surfaces such as roofs, scaffolding and/or others above that height.

While the resulting injuries from these heights are usually more serious, a larger number of falls in the workplace occur on the same level caused by slips and trips. In fact, it is estimated that 66% of falls occur on the same level. It is important that you know how to avoid them.

You should never climb on shelving to reach for objects positioned on higher levels. Similarly, never stand on a chair, desk, or table to change a light bulb or reach for something in an elevated position. Only use equipment like stepladders that are safely designed for such tasks. Never climb on construction equipment, vehicles or machinery in a manner that is not intended. When climbing up or down stairs, always use the handrail. Do not carry large or heavy objects on stairs without the assistance of a colleague. Use a freight or service elevator whenever possible.

Other factors may also contribute to low level falls include personal attributes such as age, physical/emotional health, and stress/fatigue levels. These conditions are sometimes unavoidable. However, following some simple common-sense tactics may help prevent low level falls.

- Pay attention to where you are going.
- Take your time, do not rush.
- Adjust your stride to a pace that is suitable for the task at hand.
- Walk with your feet pointed slightly outward.
- Make wide turns.

These simple tactics may seem a little ridiculous. However, you would be surprised how many workplace injuries could be prevented if workers observed these simple precautions.

