



## Slips, Trips & Falls: By John Able, CSP

Statistically speaking, more people die of falls at work and at home each year than from any other non vehicle related cause. Over 13,000 deaths are the result of a fall each year, and 70% of these are due to a lack of ordinary or reasonable maintenance. More than 256,000 non-fatal slip, trip & fall injuries result in one or more lost workdays per incident. Falling to a different level and stairs are the most common category of event.

Prior to the slip, trip or fall, we must first look at the “simple” act of walking, a semi-automatic response, more habit than thought, and the activity most people are engaged in prior to the slip, trip or fall. Walking comprises 3 components: stride (length of step), gait (tempo or rhythm), and speed (amount of force). All 3 of these components impact the likelihood and seriousness of a slip, trip or fall.

Now let’s look at slips, trips and falls.

- **Slips:** Occur when there is too little friction between an individual’s feet and the walking surface.
- **Trips:** Occur when the forward/backward movement of the foot is interrupted, causing a loss of balance.
- **Falls:** Occur when an individual loses their center of gravity or balance.

The risk factors involved with walking that affect a person’s chances of a negative event include but are not limited to vision, light, color, age, balance, and footwear.

**Note:** It should be noted that we are making the assumption that the person is paying attention to what they are doing. Distracted walking is not the subject of this article.

### \*\*\*Reminder\*\*\*

#### OSHA 300A

#### Summary of Work Related Injury and Illnesses

Employers who are required to keep the Injury and Illness log, must post Form 300A, the Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses, in a workplace every year from **February 1 to April 30.**

We typically scan about 10-20 feet ahead to identify changes or deformities in the walking surface, and our visual sharpness diminishes with age. Adequate lighting is required and the need for additional ambient light increases with age. Color contrasts



should be used to mark changes in walking surfaces, and remember that lighting affects color differentiation. A person’s balance is affected by arm function and freedom of movement, therefore carrying items will affect a person’s balance and possibly their vision.

Personal characteristics an employer may not be able to control that will affect a person’s balance include inner ear conditions, medications, and visual acuity or other vision disorders.

Footwear is an item an employer can control that can affect slip resistance and balance. Consider sole material and configuration, heel size and height when developing a footwear policy. “Reasonable” footwear for work conditions is a policy that employers should consistently enforce to control and reduce workplace injuries and fatalities.

Employees should be directed to constantly evaluate, recognize and report work environments for slip, trip and fall hazards. This would include but not be limited to:

- Slippery or wet floors
- Uneven floor surfaces
- Cluttered or obstructed work areas/passageways
- Poorly maintained walkways
- Inadequate lighting
- Unguarded floor openings and holes
- Damaged or inadequate stairs and/or stairways and rails
- Elevated work surfaces which do not have standard guardrails

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## CONN-OSHA Welcomes ...

Sharon Palmer was appointed as Connecticut Department of Labor's (CTDOL) Commissioner in August 2012 and began work on October 5. A "firm believer in the value of education and life-long learning", Commissioner Palmer earned her bachelor's degree from St. Joseph University; her master's degree from Eastern Connecticut State University; and has been named a Fellow with the Connecticut Education Fellowship Program. A resident of Quaker Hill, she is the immediate past president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and a strong advocate for Connecticut's working men and women. Commissioner Palmer pledges to continue to move the CTDOL forward in its mission to protect the rights of working people, as well as to strengthen the services this agency provides to employers.



Also in August 2012, Gwendolyn Bernard joined the CONN-OSHA family. Working as a Clerk Typist, Gwen works closely with the Occupational Health Grant participants.



## The Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries

2011 Fatal Work-Related Injuries Connecticut & United States		
Event or Exposure	CT	U.S.
<b>Total</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>4,609</b>
<b>Violence by persons or animals</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>780</b>
Homicides	4	458
Suicides	7	242
Animal and insect related incidents	--	37
<b>Transportation incidents</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1,898</b>
Pedestrian vehicular incident	5	312
Roadway incident	7	1,075
Non roadway incident	--	216
<b>Fire or explosion</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>143</b>
<b>Fall, slip, trip</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>666</b>
<b>Exposure to substances or environments</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>401</b>
<b>Contact with objects and equipment</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>708</b>

**Note:** Data for 2011 are preliminary. Totals for major categories may include subcategories not shown separately. Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics [www.bls.gov/iif/](http://www.bls.gov/iif/)

In 2011, thirty-six employees lost their lives to work-related incidents in Connecticut. This was down from 2010's total of 49 deaths. Nationally, 4,609 employees lost their lives at work in 2011. This preliminary total represents 3.5 deaths per 100,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) workers. While rates are not yet publishable on the State level, Connecticut's rate has historically been lower than the national rate.

In Connecticut, 35 of the deaths were men and 9 were self-employed. Twenty-eight percent occurred in the 35 to 44 year old age category. Eighty-three percent occurred in the private sector. This table shows number of deaths by event. Totals for major categories include subcategories not shown separately. Thirty-six percent of Connecticut's deaths were due to transportation incidents and another 33 percent to violent acts. Violent acts include homicides, suicides, incidents of unknown intent, and animal assaults. National transportation incidents include air, rail, water, animal, and non-motorized transportation incidents. In the fire or explosion category, 62 deaths were due to fires and 81 due to explosions in the United States. Exposure to harmful substances or environments include electrocutions, exposure to temperature extremes, and oxygen deficiency. Contact with objects and equipment includes workers being struck by falling objects, trenching cave-ins, and being caught in machinery or equipment.

### Changes in Census

Since 1992, the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics has recorded work-related death data through the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries program (CFIO). A recent change in this data collection system captures information on a more detailed level. An example is falls; this was always an event category but it now captures not only the fall but the height of the fall. Also new is a coding structure for nature, part of body, event and source. You may view the full press release at <http://www.bls.gov/iif/>

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# “Mirror Check”

## Preventing Vehicle Backover Injuries

Presented by

CONN-OSHA & OSHA Region I

In 2012, eight New England workers died due to being “backed over” and three other people were killed while working on or near vehicles. This type of death is completely preventable. CONN-OSHA and OSHA Region I are hosting “Mirror Check” to increase awareness of this deadly hazard.

Mirror Check is a self audit exercise that will be held on March 19, 2013, beginning at 7 a.m. and ending at 10:30 a.m. CONN-OSHA and OSHA Region I are asking our Alliances, Partners, VPP’s, State Plans, Sharp sites and other groups to participate in “Mirror Check.”

All industries, facilities and employees are exposed to backover hazards whether you work in construction, manufacturing, retail, healthcare, or education. The work environment is not the only place that backover incidents occur. All individuals exposed to motor vehicles must be trained in recognizing the hazards associated with them.

**Mission Description:** Each participating company will train their employees on hazards of motor vehicles and other mobile equipment. The company will also conduct an inspection of its facility or location. Cars, pickups, dump trucks, delivery vehicles, 18-wheelers, fork trucks and heavy construction equipment should be included in

this exercise. Participating organizations will document the training and the inspections via their own internal attendance sheets. You are asked to complete a course evaluation by 10:30 a.m. at the following address:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/GN7YMCD>. Please coordinate the totals for your site and have one course evaluation completed per site.

**Information Provided:** A standard training PowerPoint, Fact Sheets, Checklist and Quick Cards have been provided electronically and are posted on the [www.csr-em.org](http://www.csr-em.org) homepage and on their Facebook page. The material(s) provided are recommended but are not required to be used. In addition, links to other educational and training sites will be attached along with inspection tips. The supporting documents also can be found on the CONN-OSHA web site under Alerts.

<http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/osha/oshalert.htm>



## Slips, Trips & Falls, cont.



- Inadequate aisles
- Improper use of ladders and/or stepstools

Education and training should be ongoing, and discussion among employees should be encouraged concerning risks and hazards in

work areas, including gathering information about near miss incidents as leading indicators about potential future serious incidents. All slip, trip and fall events should be thoroughly investigated with goals for improvements established.

In summary, slip, trip and fall events can be dramatically reduced by ensuring that all staff are aware that slips, trips and falls are the number one type of employee inju-

ry, and that all employees have some type of active involvement in inspection activity concerning this issue. When unsafe conditions are reported, the employer should make corrective actions a priority. Maintenance of walking/working surfaces is everybody’s responsibility; implement a quick and easy way to report changes in conditions. Make slips, trips and falls an item on the Safety Committee’s training agenda, and ensure all incidents are properly investigated.

Finally, document a written trip, slip and fall reduction goal such as:

“To reduce the number and severity of injuries due to slips, trips and falls by improving conditions inside and outside the facility and improving employee exposure awareness for the safety, health and well being of all employees.”

## Fatality & Casualty Reporting

**State & Town:** CONN-OSHA (860) 263-6946 (local) or 1-866-241-4060 (toll-free)  
**Private Employers:** Report to Federal OSHA at 1-800-321-OSHA(6742)

## Hazard Corner...



In March of 2012, a Connecticut Department of Transportation (DOT) road maintenance crew employee was struck and killed by a truck on Route 8 North in Waterbury, Ct.

The employee was in the right breakdown lane of the highway picking up road debris, when the 18 wheeler swerved and struck him. The employee was caught between his vehicle and the tires of the 18 wheeler.

To all roadway travelers, be aware of your environment and the hazards that it may pose. Follow the appropriate safety procedures and keep yourselves and others safe.

April 15-19, 2013 is the Connecticut and National Work Zone Safety week. *Let them work ~ Let them Live*

The State Police charged the truck driver with:

- Failing to drive in the proper lane
- Making a false statement to police
- Interfering with an officer
- Misconduct with a motor vehicle and
- Two hours of service violations (mandatory rest period)

The employee was in the breakdown lane of the highway, the truck strobe lights were on, and he was wearing the proper personal protective equipment. He was also following the procedures set forth by DOT on how to perform this type of operation safely. The DOT provides their staff with the equipment, training and education to work on the state's streets and highways. Unfortunately, the state cannot control the actions of other drivers.



## Connecticut-OSHA ~ Training Update...

**Safe Driving – Get There Safely EVERY Time** **March 6, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to noon** Work-related vehicle crashes are the leading cause of occupational fatalities according to the U.S. Dept. of Labor. The goal of this session is to increase awareness of the need for, and the benefits of safe driving.

**OSHA Recordkeeping** **March 7, 2013 from 8:30 a.m. to noon** At this workshop, you will learn how to fill out the OSHA 300 Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses accurately and correctly.

**Work Zone Safety** **April 10, 2013, from 10:00 a.m. to noon** Basic guidelines for work zone traffic control and the requirements of Part VI of the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) with particular emphasis on short term work sites on roads and streets in rural and small urban areas will be presented.

**Trenching & Excavation** **May 1, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to noon** This workshop will provide an overview of 29 CFR 1926.650-652 excavations, including the role of the competent person. The session is designed to assist participants in identifying hazards associated with excavations and related activities.

**Confined Space Safety** **May 15, 2013 from 10:00 a.m. to noon** This workshop discusses the basic requirements and procedures involved with permit-required confined spaces as detailed in 29 CFR 1910.146.

**Breakfast Roundtable** This discussion group meets the third Tuesday of every month from 8:15 a.m. to 9:45 a.m.. Pre-registration is required. To be placed on the e-mail distribution list, contact John Able at [able.john@dol.gov](mailto:able.john@dol.gov)

Classes are free and held at 200 Folly Brook Boulevard, Wethersfield, CT in Conference Room A/B. To register, contact Catherine Zinsser at [zinsser.catherine@dol.gov](mailto:zinsser.catherine@dol.gov). Pre-registration is required. A Photo I.D. is also required to allow entry into a public building. For more training information, visit the CONN-OSHA web site [www.ctdol.state.ct.us/osha/osha.htm](http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/osha/osha.htm)