

Walking-Working Surfaces - An Overview

Overview of Topic

Slips, trips, and falls account for many industrial accidents. They cause 10 percent of all accidental deaths and are fourth as a cause of fatalities (following motor vehicles, homicides, and being struck by objects or equipment).

The OSHA standards for walking and working surfaces apply to all permanent places of employment, except where domestic, mining, or agricultural work only is performed.

At 29 CFR 1910, Subpart D—Walking-Working Surfaces, OSHA explains the rules and regulations surrounding walking-working surfaces, including railings, housekeeping, and protecting wall and floor openings.

Housekeeping

Some of the most frequently cited violations in Subpart D involve housekeeping:

- All places of employment, passageways, storerooms, and service rooms must be kept clean and orderly and in a sanitary condition.
- The floor of every workroom is to be maintained in a clean and, so far as possible, a dry condition. Where wet processes are used, drainage is to be maintained and gratings, mats, or dry standing places should be provided.
- Every floor, working place, and passageway must be kept free from protruding nails, splinters, holes, or loose boards.

Aisles and passageways

Aisles and passageways are to be kept clear and in good repair with no obstruction across or in aisles that could create a hazard.

Permanent aisles and passageways must be appropriately marked.

Where mechanical handling equipment is used, aisles need to be sufficiently wide. Improper aisle widths coupled with poor housekeeping and vehicle traffic can cause injury to employees, damage equipment, and limit egress in emergencies.

Covers and Guardrails

Covers and/or guardrails must be provided to protect personnel from the hazards of open pits, tanks, vats, ditches, and other openings.

Floor loading protection

Load rating limits must be marked on plates and conspicuously posted. It is prohibited to place a load on any floor or roof when the load is greater than that for which the floor or roof is approved.

Stairway safety

Slippery conditions on stairways must be eliminated. Clean up any spills on the stairs. When stairs are outside, keep them free of snow and ice.

Stairways need to be kept free of any clutter. Stairs are required to have a handrail.

Employee Training

There are no specific training requirements for walking-working surfaces.

Training Tips

Review 29 CFR 1910, Subpart D—Walking-Working Surfaces, and review those requirements with the trainees.

Explain the safety benefits of complying with 29 CFR 1910, Subpart D, and how it is applied in your workplace.

Detail any areas of concern in the workplace.

Explain how and to whom employees can report unsafe walking-working surface conditions.

Where To Go For More Information

29 CFR 1910, Subpart D—Walking-Working Surfaces.