Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls in the Workplace

A workers’ compensation lawyer explains steps employers can take

Slip, trip, and fall accidents at work often cause serious injuries. From broken bones to traumatic brain injuries (TBIs), a workplace slip and fall accident can be painful, require extensive medical care, and often result in many days away from work to rest and recover.

This is why it’s important for employers to take steps to prevent slip and fall accidents in workplaces. So what preventative steps can employers take to protect workers from slip and fall accidents? Why are these types of workplace accidents so common? And what legal options do injured workers have after a workplace slip, trip, and fall accident?

The New York City workers’ compensation attorneys at Pasternack Tilker Ziegler Walsh Stanton & Romano, LLP explain what injured workers need to know as well as the rights and responsibilities of employers in New York.

How common are slip, trip, and fall workplace accidents?

The numbers are clear – slip, trip, and fall accidents remain one of the most common types of workplace accidents. Each year, more than 1.1 million workers on average nationwide sustain an injury that requires them to miss days from work due to a slip and fall accident, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). That’s roughly 18 percent of all work-related injury accidents nationwide.

In addition, workplace accidents due to falls are consistently one of the most common causes of workplace fatalities. Each year, on average, more than 800 workplace fatalities nationwide occur due to slip, trip, or fall accidents, according to the National Safety Council (NSC). That works out to roughly 15 percent of all workplace fatalities nationwide, according to annual workplace fatality statistics compiled by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA).

How common are workplace slip and fall accidents in New York City?

As in the rest of the country, injuries caused by slip-and-fall accidents often occur at workplaces in New York City.

Every year, slip and fall accidents are consistently one of the top three causes of fatal workplace accidents in New York City, according to workplace accident data compiled by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI). Specifically, roughly 1 out of 4 workplace fatalities in New York City are due to slip, trip, and fall accidents.

As for non-fatal workplace injuries, roughly 18 percent of all workplace injury accidents in New York City involve slip, trip, or fall accidents as well, according to workplace accident data compiled by the NSC.
What causes workplace slip, trip, and fall accidents?

Sadly, many slip and fall accidents at work could have been prevented. That’s because many of these accidents occur due to negligence by employers who do not take the necessary precautions to prevent such accidents. Examples of workplace negligence that results in a slip, trip, and fall accident include:

- Unmarked hazards, such as uneven surfaces or water on the floor.
- Not providing safety training to workers.
- Poor lighting, especially in hallways or stairwells.
- Not providing safety equipment to workers, especially safety harnesses for construction workers who work on scaffolding or tall buildings under construction.
- Poor maintenance that results in dangerous workplace conditions, such as loose handrails, cracks in sidewalks or loose steps on a staircase or ladder.
- Improperly assembled scaffolding or ladders, especially at construction sites.
- Defective ladders and scaffolding.

What are common slip and fall accident injuries?

When slip and fall accidents occur at work, certain types of injuries often occur. Some of the most common workplace slip, trip and fall injuries include:

- Head injuries, including concussions and other types of traumatic brain injuries (TBIs).
- Bone fractures, including broken bones in the hands, arms, neck and legs.
- Hip fractures in particular are especially common due to slip and fall accidents.
- Joint injuries, which often involve knee injuries and elbow injuries.
- Back injuries, including spinal cord injuries and bone fractures involving the vertebrae and back muscles.
- Cuts, scrapes and lacerations.
- Internal injuries, including internal bleeding and organ damage.
- Chronic pain, especially lower back pain that lasts months or even years.

In addition, many slip, trip and fall accidents result in a permanent disability that can prevent injured workers from ever being able to return to work after their workplace accident.

Who’s most at risk of a workplace slip and fall accident?

Workers in certain industries face the highest risk of being injured in a slip and fall accident. The construction industry in particular nationwide and in New York City has a high workplace injury rate involving slip and fall accidents. This is especially true for falls from a height accidents. The workplace fatality rate for construction workers is seven times higher than all other industries when it comes to falls from a height accidents, according to the NSC.

In addition, younger male workers in all industries consistently get hurt more often in slip, trip and fall accidents than other workers, according to NDC workplace accident data.
What can employers do to prevent slip and fall accidents?

There are many preventative steps employers can take to prevent workplace injuries due to slip, trip and fall accidents. Such steps include:

- Clean up any spills immediately so there’s nothing to slip on at work.
- Remove any tripping hazards in walkways, stairways and other heavily traveled areas.
- Install warning signs if there’s a hazard that could cause a slip and fall accident.
- Regularly inspect work sites, especially construction sites.
- Provide safety equipment to workers, especially construction workers who work on scaffolding or in tall buildings under construction.
- Have a safety plan in place in case of a slip and fall accident.
- Post the safety plan in a prominent place so workers know what to do in such situations.
- Provide safety training to workers, including making sure workers know what to do in the event of a slip and fall accident.
- Report any hazardous conditions immediately to a workplace supervisor so such conditions can be fixed and addressed right away.

What laws apply to slip and fall accidents in New York?

Many state and federal laws apply to workplace slip and fall accidents. In particular, there are several laws created by the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) that apply to workplace fall accidents. In particular, OSHA Standard 1926 Subpart M (fall protection) has several subparts with specific regulations concerning fall protection at construction sites, including safety training requirements, guardrail guidelines, and requiring construction companies to have a safety plan in place in the event of a workplace fall accident.

What are my legal options if I’m injured in a slip and fall accident in New York?

Depending on the circumstances of your workplace slip and fall accident, you might have several legal options when it comes to obtaining the financial compensation you deserve for your injury-related expenses.

In most cases, injured workers in New York are eligible to receive workers’ compensation. A state-mandated form of insurance, workers’ compensation provides money and other benefits to most injured workers in New York. Such compensation often pays for the cost of medical care, replacement income, and many other injury-related expenses.

In addition, depending on the circumstances of your slip and fall accident, you may be eligible to receive additional financial compensation from another funding source, including:

- Another company working at the same construction site, especially if someone from that company caused your slip and fall accident. In such cases, you may be able to file a third-party workplace accident lawsuit against the company.
• The company that built the scaffolding, ladder, or other workplace equipment, especially if a manufacturing defect caused your slip, trip, or fall accident. Other possible funding sources might exist. The best way to know for sure is to talk to a workplace slip and fall accident attorney at our New York City law firm.

**Can I file a workplace slip and fall accident lawsuit in New York?**

As explained above, in certain circumstances, you may be able to take legal action and file a workplace slip and fall accident lawsuit seeking damages, the legal term for financial compensation.

However, in most cases, you cannot sue your employer if you got hurt at work as a result of a slip and fall accident. Instead, you can apply for workers’ compensation benefits to pay for your injury-related expenses. That’s how New York state’s workers’ compensation system works in most cases.

But don’t simply assume you know what legal options are available to you after your slip and fall accident. The best approach is to talk to a lawyer who thoroughly understands New York’s legal system in terms of work-related slip and fall accidents. That way, you can make sure you fully understand all the legal options available to you.

**Why should I hire a New York City workers’ compensation lawyer?**

There’s often a lot at stake after a workplace slip and fall accident. Depending on the severity of your injury, the length of your recovery and whether you can return to work, your injury-related expenses can easily add up to thousands of dollars or significantly more. This is why it’s important to talk to an attorney right away who can help you fully understand your legal rights.

Our workers’ compensation lawyers at the Law Offices of Pasternack Tilker Ziegler Walsh Stanton & Romano, LLP know what’s at stake. That’s why we want to meet with you. Our legal team has years of experience representing employees injured in workplace slip and fall accidents throughout New York City. As a result, we won’t waste a second getting right to work on your important legal case.

Get the New York City law firm that fights for injured workers’ rights. [Contact us](#) and schedule an appointment with a workplace slip and fall accident attorney focused on your best interests. We have 12 offices conveniently located throughout New York, including five offices in New York City.