

# Safetyline

Apartment Association of Michigan

## Benefits

Member

Membership in the Apartment Association carries benefits beyond savings on Work Comp insurance. Members join a network of their peers; thus gaining access to information sharing and the tools needed for effective loss control.

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Please Note: The content herein represents general information and should not replace actual training.

## Slips, Trips and Falls

### Meaningful Safety Solutions Prove Daunting

*Editor's Note: We encourage all of our members to use this information as a starting point for effective safety communication. Members should add to it based on their safety needs and work environments.*

Thousands of people are injured each year — some very seriously — when they slip, trip or fall on a dangerous floor, a flight of stairs or a rough patch of ground. In some cases, this can result in a loss of mobility, or even a loss of life. Typically, it only takes a quarter-inch change in surface level to cause a trip hazard. So, besides watching for things like heaving concrete, loose carpet and extension cords, be sure you can see your path of travel. Don't carry objects that obscure your vision. If you find yourself in this

position, find someone to be your guide.

This is a vital area of concern within the arenas of apartment management and building construction.

Additionally, a review of the most recent AAM group loss analysis shows that slips, trips and falls represent the most expensive and severe of reported claims in excess of \$10,000. This is despite workshops, newsletters and safety seminars designed to improve workplace safety.

Not only should steps be taken to make the work place as safe as possible for their workers, property owners must also be diligent in protecting the residents of their communities.

**See Slips, Trips, Fall Page 2**

## SAFETY FIRST

### Tread Carefully Around Dumpsters During Winter Months

"Better safe than sorry" are certainly words to live by when it comes to protecting your employees and residents during inclement weather.

During the winter months snow and ice can build up around dumpsters. Salting and shoveling once just isn't enough. With all the foot traffic around dumpsters, snow can be compacted and the surface can turn to an icy glaze.

The concrete pads under dumpsters in sunny areas are subject to thaw-freeze cycles

that can make for treacherous conditions.

It is not unreasonable to have maintenance techs and grounds crews check dumpster pads at least four times a day during snowy and icy conditions.

Other tips to avoiding winter hazards around your dumpsters include:

- Dumpsters should be strategically located to minimize the travel distance the employee has to push the transfer container.
- Good housekeeping should

be observed around the dumpster, with caution taken around broken glass and other protruding objects.

- Ensure that all of your dumpsters are in good condition. Check to make sure tops swing back properly and that side doors slide easily. Doors that are hard to slide could lead to a slip and fall or even cause a shoulder injury. Contact your waste hauler for repair or replacement.

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To receive a copy of Safetyline, contact Brenda Boomer at [bab@spsinsurance.com](mailto:bab@spsinsurance.com), or access it online at: [www.apartments.org](http://www.apartments.org)

## Slips, Trips and Falls

In establishing this component of a safety plan, first consider that it is a normal part of living for things to fall or to drip

### Know What You Are Dealing With Slips

Slips can be caused by wet surfaces, spills, or weather hazards like ice and snow. Slips are more likely to occur when you hurry or run, wear the wrong kind of shoes, or don't pay attention to where you're walking.

### Trips

Trips occur whenever your foot hits an object and you are moving with enough momentum to be thrown off balance. Trips are more likely to happen when you are in a hurry and don't pay attention to where you're going.

### Falls

Falls occur whenever you move too far off your center of balance.

on a floor or the ground, and for smooth surfaces to become uneven. Also, some things put in the ground — a drainage grate, for example — serve a useful purpose there. It is impossible to pick up or clean every slippery substance on a floor.

Nor is it possible to protect the ordinary person from elements he or she should expect to encounter and avoid. We all have an obligation to watch where we're going.

The goal is to create procedures so that slip, trip or fall hazards are not likely to occur.

Here are some general rules to help you establish a cohesive slip, trip and fall plan:

#### ***You can help avoid slips by following these safety precautions:***

- Clean up spills right away. Even minor spills can be hazardous.
- Don't let grease accumulate at your jobsite.
- Be extra cautious on smooth surfaces such as new floors or floors that have been waxed.
- Wear shoes with appropriate non-skid soles.

#### ***You can help avoid trips by following these safety precautions:***

- Carry only loads that you can see over.
- Keep work areas well lit. Keep your job site clean.
- Store materials and tools in cabinets or assigned storage area.
- Keep working areas clear of extension cords.
- Eliminate "loose footing" hazards on stairs, steps, and floors.
- Replace worn or torn spots in carpeting.
- Repair broken or bulging sidewalks.
- Repair, replace or remedy poor or broken

lighting components and fixtures.

- Keep passageways and aisles clear of clutter.

Managers and maintenance people should ask the question, "Would a reasonable person taking care of the property have discovered and removed or repaired any of the above problems?"

#### ***You can help avoid falls by following these safety precautions:***

- Don't jump. Lower yourself from trucks or work stages.
- Check lighting. Make sure work sites are well lit.
- Repair or replace stairs or handrails that are loose or broken.
- When climbing, use a ladder of proper length that is in good condition. Keep it placed on a firm surface. Do not climb a ladder placed on crates, stock or boxes.
- Keep the ladder's base one foot away from the wall for every four feet of height. Don't over-reach. Always have control of your balance when working from a ladder.
- Never climb a ladder with your hands full. Always carry tools in proper carrying devices.
- Make sure scaffolding is properly assembled according to manufacturer's specifications. Check carefully for defects. Standing and working planks should be level and clean.
- Use toe boards to prevent tools from falling and workers from slipping.
- Work only with people who practice scaffold safety.

Slips, trips and falls occur every day. The extent of injuries and their recurrence can be minimized through proper safety knowledge and attitudes.

Continued from Page 1

## Forum Forecast

### Employment Practices Seminar

Do you have questions regarding your employment application screening process, drug testing program, FMLA or ADA compliance? How comfortable are you with your employee termination process? Do you have questions about your HR policies and procedures? Did you know many companies are seeing a dramatic increase in the number of EEOC complaints being filed right now? This seminar is your chance to have all of those questions answered by a labor attorney. Larry Cianciosi of Hanba & Lazar, P.C. will be our guest speaker covering all of these topics and more in a high energy presentation. Please plan to join us and share your war stories and have your questions answered. See page 4 for registration information.

# SAFETY MEETING

FOR THE APARTMENT INDUSTRY

COMPANY NAME \_\_\_\_\_ JOB NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Individual Responsibility: First Line Of Defense Against Slips, Trips And Falls

*Even though it might not be your job, take the time to remove slip hazards to prevent accidents.*

*For instance:*

- Clean up spills of water, oil, or other liquids. Paper towels can be used for water. Oil and other chemicals may require special absorbent wipes.
- Repair or report liquid leaks right away. If you can't do the job safely report the problem and place a barrier around the area to prevent slips.
- Pick objects up off the floor. Even a small object like a piece of plastic on a concrete floor could cause a slip.
- Sweep up debris and waste materials. Some granular particles can act just like liquid spills on the floor and cause a slip and fall.
- Wear slip-resistant shoes.

Also take responsibility for trip hazards by following these precautions:

- Clean up debris such as straps and bands from boxes that can become entangled in a person's legs.
- Put away electrical cords and air hoses when not in use. And even when using them, be careful where you place them; make sure they're not located in places where somebody could trip over them.
- Don't stack boxes or other items in walkways.
- Keep drawers closed so that someone doesn't come by and tumble over an open drawer.
- Carry objects carefully. Make sure you can see where you're going, and watch out for obstacles that could cause a trip.
- Put away tools and other equipment after use. Someone could trip and fall over something you left lying around—perhaps even you!

SPECIAL TOPICS FOR YOUR PROJECT: \_\_\_\_\_

EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting attended by:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Fax this page to the head of your safety team

## Human Resources Managers Take Note

### The Agenda:

- Employment application screening
- Drug testing programs
- FMLA or ADA compliance
- Employee termination process
- EEOC complaints
- Have your questions answered

# Association Members: You're Invited to a Human Resources Seminar February 12, 2010 10 to 11:30 a.m.

Association Offices  
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Farmington Hills, Michigan 48334  
Contact Brenda Boomer at  
bab@spsinsurance.com for details

See Forum Forecast For Complete Details



OR CURRENT OCCUPANT



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