

EHS CONCEPTS

THE BIG THREE

The three causes behind 8 of every 10 lost-time workplace injuries, broken into seven fixable problems, with the leader's fix list for each. A free field guide.

Ryan L. Rinehart

Retired Navy Veteran · Navy Safety Technician (NEC 9571) · Navy Rescue Swimmer
19+ years in EHS · Author of Safe on Purpose and No License to Lead

Keep your people whole.

FROM RYAN

Not bad luck

The examples in this letter (the box, the shelf, the wet floor, the stairs) are composites to show the pattern, not reports of real events.

Most lost-time injuries do not make the news. A box comes off a high shelf onto someone's hand. A worker lifts a 60-pound case from the floor for the 300th time that shift. A nurse moves a patient alone because the lift is on another unit. Somebody walks across a wet floor at shift change. Each one costs days, sometimes months.

The National Safety Council's Injury Facts ranks the top causes of work injuries that kept people off the job, using Bureau of Labor Statistics data. For 2023–2024, three causes stood far above the rest: contact with objects and equipment (499,270 cases with days away from work), overexertion and bodily reaction (492,140), and falls, slips, and trips (479,480). Together they were about 80% of all 1.83 million days-away cases in private industry over those two years.

Those three labels are too big to fix. So this guide breaks them into seven problems you can actually walk and fix: things that fall or swing, running machinery, objects handled and struck against, lifting and moving loads, awkward motion and repetition, same-level slips and falls, and stairs, steps, and falls from height.

For each one you get the pain point, what the data says, the root causes, the rules in plain words with tags, controls in hierarchy order, a printable self-audit, who owns what, and one question to start a toolbox talk.

Pull your own injury log first. Find which of the seven shows up most, and start there.

Ryan L. Rinehart

Founder, EHS Concepts — The Ways of Safety

Keep your people whole.



THE VERIFIED NUMBERS

Lost-time work injuries, U.S. private industry, 2023–2024

1,834,600

Injury and illness cases with days away from work over the two years 2023–2024 (median 8 days away)

80%

Share of those cases caused by the big three: 1,470,890 of 1,834,600*

499,270

No. 1, contact incidents: about 27% of days-away cases* (median 5 days away)

492,140

No. 2, overexertion, repetitive motion, and bodily conditions (median 14 days away); No. 1 when restricted-duty cases are included (946,290)

479,480

No. 3, falls, slips, and trips (median 13 days away)

94%

Share of days-away amputations caused by contact incidents: 3,860 of 4,100*

Counting restricted-duty and job-transfer cases too (DART, BLS news release Table 2, 2023–2024), the order changes: overexertion, repetitive motion, and bodily conditions 946,290 (median 24 days), contact incidents 860,050 (median 10), and falls, slips, and trips 721,720 (median 20). Sources: National Safety Council, 2026 National Safety Month fact sheet, top work injury causes from Injury Facts (ranking of days-away cases), based on the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII), 2023–2024 (released Jan. 22, 2026): news release Table 2 and the biennial case and demographic Tables R31 (detailed event) and R4 (industry). Counts are two-year totals for private industry, not one year. BLS now publishes detailed case characteristics every two years. Events use the BLS Occupational Injury and Illness Classification System (OIICS) version 3. * Rows marked with an asterisk are EHS Concepts calculations from the published figures.

The seven injury problems in this guide

	PROBLEM	DAYS-AWAY CASES, 2023–2024	BIG-THREE FAMILY
1	Struck by falling, swinging, or propelled objects	148,340 (falling objects 100,240)	Contact
2	Caught in or struck by running machinery	53,760 (caught in during normal operation 17,940)	Contact
3	Objects handled and struck against	248,560 (object handled 114,610; struck against 75,010)	Contact
4	Lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling loads	358,920 (moving materials by hand 255,390; patient care 55,490)	Overexertion
5	Awkward motion and repetitive tasks	124,680* (bodily motion 92,570; repetitive microtasks 32,110)	Overexertion
6	Same-level slips, trips, and falls	310,690 (fall on same level 264,920)	Falls
7	Stairs, steps, and falls to a lower level	165,860* (stepping between levels 77,980; to a lower level 87,880)	Falls

Counts are BLS Table R31 (days-away cases, private industry, 2023–2024). Rows 5 and 7 add two BLS subgroups and are EHS Concepts calculations. The seven rows do not add exactly to the big-three totals because small categories (contact with animals or other people, unspecified events) are left out.

BEFORE THE SEVEN PROBLEMS

The five basics that sit under all seven

<u>OSH Act Sec. 5(a)(1)</u> General Duty Clause · BOTH · final	Keep the workplace free of recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious harm. There is no federal OSHA ergonomics standard; OSHA uses this clause for serious lifting and repetitive-motion hazards.
<u>29 CFR 1910.132(d)</u> PPE hazard assessment · GI · final	Assess the workplace for hazards that need PPE (falling objects, cuts, slips), select the right PPE, and certify the assessment in writing. PPE is the last line, not the first.
<u>29 CFR 1910.22</u> Walking-working surfaces · GI · final	Keep surfaces clean, orderly, dry where feasible, and free of hazards. Inspect them and fix or guard hazards before anyone uses the surface again.
<u>29 CFR 1904.7 and OSH Act 11(c)</u> Recording and reporting · BOTH · final	Record cases with days away or restricted duty on the OSHA 300 Log. Do not punish workers for reporting; under-reporting hides the problems this guide is about.
<u>NIOSH Lifting Equation</u> Revised (RNLE) · GUIDANCE	A free method to score a lift. It starts from 51 lb under ideal conditions and reduces for reach, height, travel, twist, frequency, and grip. NIOSH recommends a Lifting Index of 1.0 or lower. Source: NIOSH, Applications Manual for the Revised NIOSH Lifting Equation, DHHS (NIOSH) Pub. 94-110.

Tags: GI = general industry (29 CFR 1910). CON = construction (29 CFR 1926). BOTH = applies to both (the OSH Act, 29 CFR 1904). STATE = one state's law. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself.

Ten-minute foundation check

#	CHECK	YES	NO
1	We sorted the last three years of our injury log by the seven problems in this guide and know our top two.	☐	☐
2	Every case with days away or restricted duty is on the 300 Log, with days counted.	☐	☐
3	Workers can report an injury or early pain without discipline, and we can show one recent report that got fixed.	☐	☐
4	We have a written, certified PPE hazard assessment that matches the work today.	☐	☐
5	Walking surfaces are inspected on a schedule, and the last inspection is written down.	☐	☐
6	We have scored at least one heavy or frequent lift with the NIOSH equation or a similar tool.	☐	☐
7	Machine guarding and lockout are checked on a schedule, not only after an injury.	☐	☐
8	Someone with authority reviews injury trends with supervisors at least quarterly.	☐	☐

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Walk it. Score it. Own it.

1. Start with the problem that shows up most in your own injury log, not the one at the top of this guide.
2. Print the self-audit page. Walk one area, one task, or one crew. Thirty minutes.
3. Score what you can see or put your hand on, not what the binder says. If the binder and the floor disagree, the binder is wrong until the floor changes.
4. Every “No” gets one owner and one date before you leave. Anything that could hurt someone today gets stopped now.
5. Walk it again in 30 days. A fix that is not verified is a wish.

Spotlight: where the big three land

THE PAIN POINT **A hospital's injury reports are sorted by unit, not by cause. Nobody notices that the same lift, the same hallway, and the same supply room show up again and again.** (illustrative)

BLS industry data for 2023–2024 shows where each cause concentrates. Among two-digit NAICS sectors, health care and social assistance had the most days-away cases from overexertion and bodily reaction (96,660) and from falls, slips, and trips (81,820). Manufacturing had the most from contact incidents (85,830). Transportation and warehousing had 89,730 overexertion cases, and construction had 45,220 fall cases. (Source: BLS Table R4; ranking among sectors is an EHS Concepts reading of the table.)

If you are in one of those sectors, your top problem is probably already in this guide. Sort your own injury log by cause and you will usually find two or three tasks behind most of it.

- ☐ Our injury log is sorted by cause and task, not just by department.
- ☐ We have compared our top causes to the industry pattern for our sector.

USE THIS EVERY TIME

When you find a gap: the eight-step response

1. Stop or contain.	If the gap could hurt someone today (a missing guard, a stack ready to fall, a spill, a broken stair tread, a lift that is too heavy for one person), stop that task now. Anyone can call it. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.
2. Fix the condition first.	Guard it, restack it, clean it, repair it, add the lift aid or the second person. Then fix the paperwork so it says what is true.
3. Find the decision that allowed it.	Ask what made the condition normal: a rate standard, a staffing level, a storage layout, a budget deferral. Do not stop at “they should have been careful.”
4. One owner. One date.	One name, not a department. One date, not “ASAP.”
5. Verify in the field.	The owner shows the fix at the task. Re-check in 30 days.
6. Look sideways.	If it is in one area, one shift, or one site, check the others this week.
7. Protect the person who raised it.	Thank them and tell them what changed. Retaliation for reporting an injury or hazard is illegal under Section 11(c) of the OSH Act.
8. Get help when you need it.	OSHA's On-Site Consultation Program is free, confidential, and separate from enforcement for small and mid-size employers (osha.gov/consultation). Your insurer's loss-control staff are also a free resource.

Leaders own the conditions. Workers make choices inside the conditions we build. When a gap shows up, the first question is not “who did it?” It is “what did we build, fund, schedule, or tolerate that made this normal?”

This guide is a practical summary for planning and self-audit. It is not legal or medical advice and does not replace the text of OSHA or state rules. State-plan states may have different or additional rules. Regulatory text is paraphrased. When this guide and a regulation disagree, the regulation controls. Injury figures are national two-year totals for private industry and will not match any one company's experience.

01 Struck by falling, swinging, or propelled objects

29 CFR 1910.176(b), 1926.250(a), 1910.135, 1910.136, 1910.212(a)(1) [GI/CON]

148,340

days-away cases from being struck by falling, swinging, or propelled objects, 2023–2024

100,240

of those were struck by a falling object

26,350

struck by a swinging or slipping object, such as a load on a hoist or a part on a machine

THE PAIN POINT A carton comes off the top beam of a pallet rack while a picker reaches for the one below it. Nobody stacked it to fall; it was just put wherever there was room. (illustrative)

What the data says

Source: BLS SOII Table R31, days-away-from-work cases, private industry, 2023–2024 two-year total. Being struck by an object or equipment that is falling, swinging, or propelled caused 148,340 days-away cases: falling objects 100,240, swinging or slipping objects 26,350, and propelled objects (flying chips, parts, released tension) 18,890. This is the largest single cause of injury inside the contact family after objects being handled.

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Overstacked or unsecured loads on racks, shelves, and pallets.
- Work and walkways under overhead loads, hoists, and racking.
- Damaged rack beams and missing back-stops or netting.
- Grinders and tools without guards or shields, so chips and parts fly.
- Head and foot protection not matched to the overhead and dropped-object hazard.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · STRUCK BY FALLING, SWINGING, OR PROPELLED OBJECTS

What the rules require, in plain words

1910.176(b) · GI · final	Storage must not create a hazard. Material stored in tiers is stacked, blocked, interlocked, and limited in height so it is stable and secure against sliding or collapse.
1926.250(a)(1) · CON · final	All materials stored in tiers are stacked, racked, blocked, interlocked, or otherwise secured to prevent sliding, falling, or collapse.
1910.135(a) · GI · final	Workers wear protective helmets where there is a potential for head injury from falling objects. Construction: 1926.100 [CON].
1910.136(a) · GI · final	Workers wear protective footwear where there is a danger of foot injury from falling or rolling objects or objects piercing the sole.
1910.212(a)(1) · GI · final	Machine guarding protects the operator and others from hazards such as rotating parts and flying chips and sparks.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. State-plan states may have different or additional rules. Tags: GI = general industry (29 CFR 1910). CON = construction (29 CFR 1926). BOTH = applies to both (the OSH Act, 29 CFR 1904). STATE = one state's law. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Store heavy and awkward items at waist to shoulder height. Nothing heavy above head height.
Engineer	Rack back-stops, wire decking, and netting; toe boards on mezzanines; guards and shields on grinders and saws.
Equipment	Hard hats where things can fall; safety-toe footwear where loads are handled; face shields at grinders.
Administrative	No-go zones under lifts and overhead work. Rack inspection with damaged beams tagged out. Stack-height limits posted.
Small-shop fix	Walk every rack and shelf this week. Pull down anything heavy stored above shoulder height, and anything leaning or overhanging.

Leaders own the conditions. If the fix only works when someone is careful every single time, it is not a fix. Build it so the box is at waist height, the guard is on, and the floor is dry before anyone has to think about it.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

01 · Struck by falling, swinging, or propelled objects

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Heavy items are stored between waist and shoulder height.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Nothing overhangs a rack or shelf edge.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Rack beams and uprights are undamaged, or damaged bays are tagged out.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Back-stops or netting are in place where items can fall into an aisle.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Stacks are stable, blocked, and within posted height limits.	☐	☐	☐	
6	No one works or walks under a suspended load.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Grinders have work rests, tongue guards, and wheel guards set correctly.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Hard hats are worn where the PPE assessment says objects can fall.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Safety-toe footwear is worn where loads are handled or rolled.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Workers can name the overhead hazard in their area.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · STRUCK BY FALLING, SWINGING, OR PROPELLED OBJECTS

Who owns it

Site leader	Funds rack protection and sets the storage-height rule.
Warehouse / area supervisor	Enforces stack limits and the no-go zone under lifts.
Maintenance lead	Inspects and repairs racks and machine guards.
Workers	Restack or report anything that could fall, and stay out from under loads.
Safety lead	Keeps the PPE hazard assessment current and audits storage monthly.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Look up in every aisle. Count items that could fall into the walkway.
- Check one grinder and one saw for guards set to spec.
- Ask a worker where the heaviest item in their area is stored, and why there.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

What is stored above your head right now that you would not want to catch?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Clear the aisle and restack anything that could fall today. Name the owner and date for rack repair and for moving heavy items down. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

02 Caught in or struck by running machinery

29 CFR 1910.212, 1910.147, 1910.178(l) [GI]; OSH Act 5(a)(1) [BOTH]

53,760

days-away cases from contact with running powered equipment, 2023–2024

1,900

days-away amputations from running equipment, 46% of all days-away amputations*

10,390

struck by running equipment during maintenance, cleaning, or testing

THE PAIN POINT **A line jams near the end of a shift. The operator reaches in to clear it with the conveyor still running because lockout takes ten minutes and the line is behind.** (illustrative)

What the data says

Source: BLS SOII Table R31, days-away-from-work cases, private industry, 2023–2024 two-year total. Contact with running powered equipment caused 53,760 days-away cases. Caught in running equipment during normal operations caused 17,940, being struck by running equipment during maintenance, cleaning, or testing caused 10,390, and being struck by a rolling powered vehicle in non-roadway settings (such as a forklift) caused 6,970. Running equipment caused 1,900 of 4,100 days-away amputations.

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Guards removed for cleaning or jam-clearing and not put back.
- Jams cleared with the machine running because lockout is slow or unclear.
- “Minor servicing” treated as an exception without effective alternative protection.
- No machine-specific lockout procedures, so workers guess the energy sources.
- Pedestrians and forklifts sharing the same aisles.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · CAUGHT IN OR STRUCK BY RUNNING MACHINERY

What the rules require, in plain words

1910.212(a)(1) · GI · final	Guard machines to protect the operator and others from point-of-operation, ingoing nip points, rotating parts, and flying chips.
1910.212(a)(3)(ii) · GI · final	Guard the point of operation where the machine's operation exposes a worker to injury.
1910.147(c)(1) · GI · final	Have an energy control program: procedures, training, and periodic inspections so machines are isolated and inoperative before servicing or maintenance.
1910.147(a)(2)(ii) · GI · final	Servicing during normal production is covered when a worker removes or bypasses a guard or puts any part of the body where work is done on the material or in a danger zone.
1910.178(l) · GI · final	Forklift operators are trained and evaluated before operating, with refresher training after unsafe operation, an incident or near miss, or a poor evaluation.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. State-plan states may have different or additional rules. Tags: GI = general industry (29 CFR 1910). CON = construction (29 CFR 1926). BOTH = applies to both (the OSH Act, 29 CFR 1904). STATE = one state's law. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Design out reach-in jam clearing: chutes, sensors, and remote reset so nobody puts a hand in.
Engineer	Fixed or interlocked guards; light curtains; two-hand controls; lockable disconnects at the machine.
Equipment	Lockout devices and personal locks issued to every authorized worker; no loose clothing or gloves near rotating parts.
Administrative	Machine-specific lockout procedures posted at the machine. Annual periodic inspections. Separate pedestrian and forklift routes.
Small-shop fix	Pick the machine that jams most. Write its one-page lockout procedure with photos of each energy source, and post it on the machine this week.

Leaders own the conditions. If the fix only works when someone is careful every single time, it is not a fix. Build it so the box is at waist height, the guard is on, and the floor is dry before anyone has to think about it.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

02 · Caught in or struck by running machinery

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Every point of operation, nip point, and rotating part is guarded.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Guards are fastened, not leaning in place.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Interlocks work and have not been bypassed.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Each machine has a written, machine-specific lockout procedure.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Authorized workers have their own locks and use them for jams and cleaning.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Periodic lockout inspections were done in the last 12 months.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Minor servicing exceptions use a real alternative protection, in writing.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Forklift operators are trained, evaluated, and current.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Pedestrian walkways are marked and separated from truck traffic.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Workers can show how to clear the most common jam safely.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · CAUGHT IN OR STRUCK BY RUNNING MACHINERY

Who owns it

Plant manager	Funds guarding and design fixes for jam-prone equipment.
Production supervisor	Stops any reach-in on a running machine and never pressures a skip.
Maintenance lead	Writes machine-specific procedures and keeps guards and interlocks working.
Operators	Lock out every time and report jams that keep happening.
Safety lead	Runs annual lockout inspections and guards audits.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Watch one jam being cleared. Check whether energy was isolated.
- Test one interlock. Confirm the machine stops.
- Ask an operator which machine they would least like to lock out, and why.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER**When this line jams, what do you actually do, step by step?**

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Stop any machine running without its guard, and lock it out. Name the owner and date for the guard and for the design fix that removes the reach-in. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

03 Objects handled and struck against

29 CFR 1910.132(d), 1910.138, 1910.176(a), 1910.22(a) [GI]

248,560

days-away cases from contact with non-running objects and equipment, 2023–2024

114,610

injured by an object being handled, such as a dropped part, a knife, or a sheet edge

75,010

struck against a stationary object, such as a rack, a door, or a table corner

THE PAIN POINT A worker breaks down boxes with a dull fixed-blade knife, cutting toward the hand. Gloves are in the office because the ones on the floor are the wrong size. (illustrative)

What the data says

Source: BLS SOII Table R31, days-away-from-work cases, private industry, 2023–2024 two-year total. Contact with objects and equipment that were not running caused 248,560 days-away cases, the biggest group in the contact family. An object being handled caused 114,610, striking against a stationary object 75,010, struck or caught by shifting objects 23,210, and caught between non-running objects 10,490.

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Cutting tools that make the hand the backstop: open blades, dull blades, cutting toward the body.
- Gloves missing, worn out, or not matched to the cut or pinch hazard.
- Cluttered aisles and work areas with sharp corners and protruding objects.
- Loads carried that block the worker's view.
- Shifting loads (pipe, sheets, boxes on a cart) not blocked or chocked.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · OBJECTS HANDLED AND STRUCK AGAINST

What the rules require, in plain words

1910.132(d) · GI · final	Assess hazards that need PPE, select it, communicate the selection, make sure it fits, and certify the assessment in writing.
1910.138(a) · GI · final	Select and require hand protection when hands are exposed to hazards such as severe cuts, lacerations, abrasions, punctures, and burns.
1910.138(b) · GI · final	Base glove selection on the glove's performance for the tasks, conditions, duration, and hazards.
1910.176(a) · GI · final	Keep aisles and passageways clear and in good repair, with no obstruction that could create a hazard.
1910.22(a)(3) · GI · final	Keep walking-working surfaces free of hazards such as sharp or protruding objects.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. State-plan states may have different or additional rules. Tags: GI = general industry (29 CFR 1910). CON = construction (29 CFR 1926). BOTH = applies to both (the OSH Act, 29 CFR 1904). STATE = one state's law. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Order supplies in packaging that does not need a knife, or that opens with a tear strip.
Engineer	Self-retracting or concealed-blade cutters; edge guards on racks and tables; carts with sides and chocks.
Equipment	Cut-rated gloves (ANSI/ISEA 105 level chosen for the task), in sizes that fit, at the point of use.
Administrative	Clear-aisle rule with a daily check. Cut away from the body. Two-person or cart carry for loads that block vision.
Small-shop fix	Swap every open fixed-blade knife for a self-retracting cutter this month, and put fitted cut gloves next to each cutting station.

Leaders own the conditions. If the fix only works when someone is careful every single time, it is not a fix. Build it so the box is at waist height, the guard is on, and the floor is dry before anyone has to think about it.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

03 · Objects handled and struck against

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	No open fixed-blade knives in general use.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Cutters are sharp, and blades are changed on a schedule.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Cut-rated gloves in the right sizes are at the point of use.	☐	☐	☐	
4	The PPE hazard assessment covers cutting and pinch tasks.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Aisles and passageways are clear of stored material.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Sharp corners and protruding edges at body height are padded or removed.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Shifting loads on carts and racks are blocked or chocked.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Carts are used for loads that block the carrier's view.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Workers know where to get new blades and gloves.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Cut and bruise reports are reviewed for repeat locations.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any "No" that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · OBJECTS HANDLED AND STRUCK AGAINST

Who owns it

Site leader	Funds safer cutters and gloves and backs the clear-aisle rule.
Supervisor	Checks aisles daily and pulls unsafe knives.
Purchasing	Buys the selected cutters and gloves, not cheaper substitutes.
Workers	Use the cutter and gloves provided, and report repeat bumps and cuts.
Safety lead	Updates the PPE assessment and reviews cut injuries by location.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Collect every knife in one area. Count open fixed blades.
- Walk the main aisle. Count obstructions.
- Ask a worker which corner or edge everyone hits.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

What is the sharpest thing you touch every day, and what protects your hand from it?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Pull open-blade knives and clear any blocked aisle today. Name the owner and date for replacement cutters, gloves, and edge guards. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

04 Lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling loads

OSH Act 5(a)(1) [BOTH]; NIOSH Lifting Equation, OSHA Safe Patient Handling [GUIDANCE]; 29 CFR 1910.178 [GI]

358,920

days-away cases from overexertion moving objects, 2023–2024

255,390

from lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling materials by hand

55,490

from medical and custodial care, mostly moving patients and residents

THE PAIN POINT A night-shift aide repositions a patient alone because the lift is on another floor and the second person is on break. Her back gives the next morning.

(illustrative)

What the data says

Source: BLS SOII Table R31, days-away-from-work cases, private industry, 2023–2024 two-year total. Overexertion involving outside sources, mostly moving objects, caused 358,920 days-away cases: moving materials by hand 255,390, medical and custodial care 55,490, and handling tools 28,540. The overexertion family has the longest median time away of the big three (14 days, BLS Table 2). Health care and social assistance had the most overexertion cases of any sector (96,660), including 38,920 in hospitals and 26,240 in nursing and residential care (BLS Table R4).

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Loads lifted from the floor or above the shoulder, far from the body.
- Rates and staffing that leave no time to get a cart, a lift, or a second person.
- Lift aids that exist but are broken, far away, or slower than lifting.
- Patient handling done manually because equipment or trained staff are not on the unit.
- Push and pull loads on bad wheels, wrong casters, or rough floors.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · LIFTING, CARRYING, PUSHING, AND PULLING LOADS

What the rules require, in plain words

OSH Act 5(a)(1) · BOTH · final	No federal OSHA ergonomics standard exists. OSHA can cite serious, recognized lifting hazards under the General Duty Clause when feasible fixes exist.
NIOSH RNLE · GUIDANCE	Score lifts against a 51 lb ideal-condition limit reduced for reach, height, distance, twist, frequency, and grip. A Lifting Index above 1.0 means elevated risk. Source: NIOSH Pub. 94-110 (Applications Manual for the Revised NIOSH Lifting Equation).
OSHA Safe Patient Handling · GUIDANCE	OSHA recommends minimizing manual lifting of patients and using lift equipment and trained staff.
1910.178(l) · GI · final	Workers who use forklifts and other powered industrial trucks to move loads are trained and evaluated.
State laws · STATE	Several states have safe patient handling laws for hospitals and nursing homes. Check your state; requirements vary.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. State-plan states may have different or additional rules. Tags: GI = general industry (29 CFR 1910). CON = construction (29 CFR 1926). BOTH = applies to both (the OSH Act, 29 CFR 1904). STATE = one state's law. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Deliver and store loads at waist height. Buy smaller packages. Bring the work to the worker.
Engineer	Lift tables, vacuum lifters, conveyors, ceiling or floor patient lifts, powered carts.
Equipment	Carts with large, maintained casters; handles on loads; slide sheets for patients.
Administrative	Score the top five lifts with the NIOSH equation. Team lift or equipment over a set weight. Lift equipment and trained staff on every unit and shift. Job rotation.
Small-shop fix	Find the heaviest item lifted from the floor most often. Put it on a pallet stand or shelf at waist height this week.

Leaders own the conditions. If the fix only works when someone is careful every single time, it is not a fix. Build it so the box is at waist height, the guard is on, and the floor is dry before anyone has to think about it.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

04 · Lifting, carrying, pushing, and pulling loads

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	We know our top five lifts by weight and frequency.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Those lifts are scored with the NIOSH equation or a similar tool.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Any lift with a Lifting Index over 1.0 has a fix with an owner and date.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Heavy items are stored and delivered at waist height.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Lift aids are within reach, working, and faster than lifting by hand.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Cart wheels and casters are maintained and right for the floor.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Patient lifts and slings are on every unit, charged, and in working order (health care).	☐	☐	☐	
8	Staff are trained on the lift equipment on their unit.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Rates or staffing allow time to use the aid or get a second person.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Early reports of pain lead to a job review, not discipline.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · LIFTING, CARRYING, PUSHING, AND PULLING LOADS

Who owns it

Site or nursing leader	Funds lift equipment and sets staffing that allows its use.
Supervisor / charge nurse	Makes sure lifts and a second person are available every shift.
Engineering / facilities	Installs lift tables and storage at waist height and maintains carts and lifts.
Workers	Use the aid, ask for help, and report early pain.
Safety / ergonomics lead	Scores lifts and tracks fixes to closure.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Watch the heaviest lift in the area. Estimate weight, reach, and frequency.
- Find the nearest lift aid. Time how long it takes to get it.
- Ask a worker which lift hurts most at the end of a shift.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

Which lift here would you not want your kid doing 300 times a shift?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Stop any lift that is clearly beyond one person today and add a second person or equipment. Name the owner and date for the engineering fix. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

05

Awkward motion and repetitive tasks

OSH Act 5(a)(1) [BOTH]; OSHA Ergonomics, NIOSH [GUIDANCE]; 29 CFR 1904 [BOTH]

124,680*

days-away cases from bodily motion and repetitive motion, 2023–2024

37,200

from twisting, reaching, and bending (part of bodily position and motion)

32,110

from repetitive motion with microtasks, such as typing, gripping, or assembly

THE PAIN POINT A packer reaches over a high table edge and twists to the pallet behind her hundreds of times a shift. Her wrist has hurt for weeks, but she does not want to be the one who complains. (illustrative)

What the data says

Source: BLS SOII Table R31, days-away-from-work cases, private industry, 2023–2024 two-year total. Bodily position and motion caused 92,570 days-away cases, including 37,200 from twisting, reaching, and bending, 15,420 from climbing or stepping up or down, and 4,900 from kneeling or crawling. Repetitive motion involving microtasks caused 32,110, including 4,980 carpal tunnel syndrome cases. Together that is 124,680 (EHS Concepts calculation). Health care and transportation and warehousing also lead overexertion cases (BLS Table R4).

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Workstations at the wrong height, with reaches over or around obstacles.
- Twisting to place or pick because layouts put the source and destination at the worker's back.
- High-repetition tasks without rotation or recovery time.
- Tools that need force, pinch grips, or bent wrists.
- Early symptoms not reported because workers fear blame or lost hours.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · AWKWARD MOTION AND REPETITIVE TASKS

What the rules require, in plain words

OSH Act 5(a)(1) · BOTH · final	Serious, recognized ergonomic hazards with feasible fixes can be cited under the General Duty Clause.
29 CFR 1904.7 · BOTH · final	Musculoskeletal disorders that meet recording criteria (days away, restricted work, medical treatment) go on the OSHA 300 Log.
OSH Act 11(c) and 1904.35(b)(1)(iv) · BOTH · final	Employers may not discourage or retaliate against workers for reporting an injury or illness.
OSHA Ergonomics · GUIDANCE	OSHA publishes industry guidelines and recommends a process: management support, worker involvement, hazard identification, fixes, training, and evaluation.
NIOSH · GUIDANCE	NIOSH tools and the Lifting Equation help rank tasks; early reporting and job redesign are recommended.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. State-plan states may have different or additional rules. Tags: GI = general industry (29 CFR 1910). CON = construction (29 CFR 1926). BOTH = applies to both (the OSH Act, 29 CFR 1904). STATE = one state's law. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Automate the highest-repetition step, or redesign the product or package so the motion is not needed.
Engineer	Adjustable-height workstations, turntables, tilt tables, and layouts that keep work in front and between waist and shoulder.
Equipment	Powered or low-force tools with handles that keep the wrist straight; anti-fatigue mats.
Administrative	Job rotation across different muscle groups, micro-breaks, and a pain-reporting process that leads to a job fix.
Small-shop fix	Ask workers which task hurts most at the end of a shift. Change that station's height or layout this month.

Leaders own the conditions. If the fix only works when someone is careful every single time, it is not a fix. Build it so the box is at waist height, the guard is on, and the floor is dry before anyone has to think about it.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

05 · Awkward motion and repetitive tasks

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Work is done between waist and shoulder height and in front of the body.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Workers do not twist to pick and place.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Workstations adjust to the person, not the other way around.	☐	☐	☐	
4	High-repetition tasks rotate with different tasks.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Tools keep wrists straight and need low force.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Workers can report pain early without discipline.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Early reports lead to a job review within a week.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Recordable MSDs are on the 300 Log with days counted.	☐	☐	☐	
9	We review MSD cases by task at least quarterly.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Workers helped choose the last ergonomic fix.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · AWKWARD MOTION AND REPETITIVE TASKS

Who owns it

Site leader	Funds workstation fixes and backs early reporting.
Supervisor	Acts on early pain reports and manages rotation.
Engineering / maintenance	Adjusts and rebuilds workstations and tools.
Workers	Report symptoms early and help design fixes.
Safety lead	Tracks MSD cases by task and checks fixes worked.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Watch one station for five minutes. Count reaches above the shoulder and twists.
- Pull MSD cases for the year. Find the top task.
- Ask a worker what they would change about their station first.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

Which part of your body tells you the shift has been long, and which task causes it?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Fix the worst reach or twist at the station today if it can be done with a stand, mat, or move. Name the owner and date for the workstation redesign. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

06 Same-level slips, trips, and falls

29 CFR 1910.22(a), (d), 1910.136, 1910.176(a) [GI]; 1926.25 [CON]

310,690

days-away cases from falls, slips, and trips on the same level, 2023–2024

264,920

of those were falls on the same level

81,820

fall, slip, and trip cases in health care and social assistance, the most of any sector

THE PAIN POINT Mop water from the night crew is still drying at the main entrance when the day shift walks in carrying coffee. There is a sign, but it is behind the door.

(illustrative)

What the data says

Source: BLS SOII Table R31, days-away-from-work cases, private industry, 2023–2024 two-year total. Falls, slips, and trips on the same level caused 310,690 days-away cases, including 264,920 falls on the same level and 34,830 slips or trips without a fall. Falls, slips, and trips as a family have a median of 13 days away (BLS Table 2), and caused 79,160 days-away fractures across all fall types. Health care and social assistance had the most fall, slip, and trip cases of any sector (BLS Table R4).

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Wet, oily, or icy floors, especially at entrances, kitchens, and wash areas.
- Clutter, cords, and hoses across walkways.
- Uneven floors, damaged mats, and changes in level that are hard to see.
- Poor lighting and carrying loads that block the view of the floor.
- Footwear with poor slip resistance for the floor and the contaminant.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · SAME-LEVEL SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

What the rules require, in plain words

1910.22(a)(1)–(2) · GI · final	Keep surfaces clean, orderly, sanitary, and dry where feasible; maintain drainage and dry standing places where wet processes are used.
1910.22(a)(3) · GI · final	Keep surfaces free of hazards such as loose boards, corrosion, leaks, spills, snow, and ice.
1910.22(d) · GI · final	Inspect surfaces regularly and as necessary, and correct or guard hazards before anyone uses the surface again.
1910.176(a) · GI · final	Keep aisles and passageways clear and in good repair, and mark permanent aisles.
1926.25 · CON · final	Keep scrap, debris, and form lumber clear of work areas, passageways, and stairs during construction.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. State-plan states may have different or additional rules. Tags: GI = general industry (29 CFR 1910). CON = construction (29 CFR 1926). BOTH = applies to both (the OSH Act, 29 CFR 1904). STATE = one state's law. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Fix the source: leaking roofs, valves, and machines; route drains; schedule floor cleaning outside of traffic times.
Engineer	Slip-resistant flooring or coatings, entrance matting long enough to dry shoes, good lighting, cord covers and overhead cord drops.
Equipment	Slip-resistant footwear matched to the floor and contaminant; ice cleats for outdoor winter work.
Administrative	Clean-as-you-go, spill kits at known wet spots, a walking-surface inspection log, and winter de-icing plans.
Small-shop fix	Map every spot where someone slipped in the last two years. Put a spill kit and a matting fix at the top three this week.

Leaders own the conditions. If the fix only works when someone is careful every single time, it is not a fix. Build it so the box is at waist height, the guard is on, and the floor is dry before anyone has to think about it.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

06 · Same-level slips, trips, and falls

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Floors are dry, or wet areas have drainage, mats, or false floors.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Leaks are reported and fixed, not just mopped.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Entrance mats are long enough and lie flat.	☐	☐	☐	
4	No cords, hoses, or material cross walkways.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Lighting lets workers see the floor and changes in level.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Changes in level and edges are marked.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Walking surfaces are inspected on a schedule, with a written record.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Spill kits are at known wet spots.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Footwear rules match the floor and contaminant.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Snow and ice plans name who clears what, and by when.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · SAME-LEVEL SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

Who owns it

Site leader	Funds floor repairs, matting, and lighting.
Facilities	Fixes leaks and drainage and runs the winter plan.
Supervisor	Checks walkways each shift and enforces clean-as-you-go.
Workers	Clean or report spills right away and wear the right footwear.
Safety lead	Maps slip incidents and audits walking surfaces.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Walk the main routes at shift change. Count wet spots and trip hazards.
- Check the last walking-surface inspection record.
- Ask a worker where people slip most, and why it is still slippery.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

Where on this site have you almost gone down, and did anyone fix it?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Clean and block any wet or damaged walkway now. Name the owner and date for fixing the source (leak, drain, floor, lighting). Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

07

Stairs, steps, and falls to a lower level

29 CFR 1910.23, 1910.25, 1910.28(b), 1910.30 [GI]; 1926.501(b)(1), 1926.1052, 1926.1053 [CON]

165,860*

days-away cases from stepping between levels and falls to a lower level, 2023–2024

77,980

from slips, trips, and stumbles while stepping between levels, such as on stairs, curbs, and vehicle steps

87,880

from falls to a lower level, such as from ladders, docks, and equipment

THE PAIN POINT A driver steps down from the cab facing out, with a tablet in one hand. The bottom step is icy. Same story on the warehouse stairs, where the handrail stops two steps short of the bottom. (illustrative)

What the data says

Source: BLS SOII Table R31, days-away-from-work cases, private industry, 2023–2024 two-year total. Slips, trips, and stumbles while stepping between levels caused 77,980 days-away cases, and falls to a lower level caused 87,880 (including 8,150 from collapsing structures or equipment). Together that is 165,860 (EHS Concepts calculation). Falls to a lower level are also a leading cause of work deaths; see the series guides on construction and fatal events.

Why it really happens

Not worker carelessness. These are the system and leadership conditions that make this predictable.

- Carrying items on stairs and vehicle steps, so there is no hand on the rail.
- Stairs with uneven risers, missing or short handrails, or worn treads.
- Stepladders used as stools; ladders not set up or secured right.
- Dock edges, mezzanines, and openings left unguarded.
- Climbing on and off equipment facing away, without three points of contact.

REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROLS · STAIRS, STEPS, AND FALLS TO A LOWER LEVEL

What the rules require, in plain words

1910.25(b) · GI · final	Stairs have handrails and stair rails per 1910.28 and uniform riser heights and tread depths between landings; standard stairs have risers no taller than 9.5 inches.
1910.28(b)(1), (b)(11) · GI · final	Protect workers at unprotected sides and edges 4 feet or more above a lower level. Flights with at least 3 treads and 4 risers have stair rails and handrails.
1910.23(b) · GI · final	Ladders have uniform, level rungs and steps, are used only for their designed purpose, and are inspected before first use each shift. 1910.30 requires fall-hazard training.
1926.501(b)(1) · CON · final	Protect construction workers at unprotected sides and edges 6 feet or more above a lower level.
1926.1052, 1926.1053 · CON · final	Construction stairs have uniform risers and treads (no more than 1/4-inch variation in a flight). Portable ladders used for access extend at least 3 feet above the landing or are secured.

Paraphrased. Federal regulatory text checked on eCFR (current to Oct. 8, 2026) on Oct. 13, 2026. State-plan states may have different or additional rules. Tags: GI = general industry (29 CFR 1910). CON = construction (29 CFR 1926). BOTH = applies to both (the OSH Act, 29 CFR 1904). STATE = one state's law. GUIDANCE = advisory; it is not a rule and cannot be cited by itself.

Controls that work, in hierarchy order

Eliminate	Bring work to ground level; replace stairs and ladders with ramps or lifts where traffic is heavy.
Engineer	Continuous handrails both sides; slip-resistant, high-contrast nosings; guardrails at docks and mezzanines; platform ladders instead of stepladders; vehicle grab handles and lit steps.
Equipment	Footwear with slip resistance and heel; tool belts and bags so hands stay free.
Administrative	Hands-free on stairs (no carrying with both hands); three points of contact facing the vehicle; ladder inspection and selection rules; fall-hazard training.
Small-shop fix	Walk every stairway this week. Mark short or missing handrails and uneven or damaged treads, and add high-contrast nosing tape.

Leaders own the conditions. If the fix only works when someone is careful every single time, it is not a fix. Build it so the box is at waist height, the guard is on, and the floor is dry before anyone has to think about it.

30-MINUTE SELF-AUDIT · PRINT AND TAKE TO THE FLOOR

07 · Stairs, steps, and falls to a lower level

SITE	AREA / JOB / CREW	AUDITOR	DATE
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#	CHECK WHAT YOU CAN SEE OR PUT YOUR HAND ON	YES	NO	N/A	NOTES
1	Every flight of 4 or more risers has handrails and stair rails.	☐	☐	☐	
2	Handrails run the full length of the stairs.	☐	☐	☐	
3	Risers and treads are uniform; no damaged or worn treads.	☐	☐	☐	
4	Stair nosings are slip-resistant and easy to see.	☐	☐	☐	
5	Workers keep a hand free for the rail on stairs.	☐	☐	☐	
6	Edges and openings 4 ft or more up (6 ft in construction) are protected.	☐	☐	☐	
7	Ladders are inspected, the right type, and set up correctly.	☐	☐	☐	
8	Workers climb on and off vehicles and equipment facing in, with three points of contact.	☐	☐	☐	
9	Steps and grab handles on vehicles and equipment are clean and lit.	☐	☐	☐	
10	Workers exposed to fall hazards have been trained.	☐	☐	☐	

#	GAP FOUND	OWNER (ONE NAME)	DUE	VERIFIED

Rule: any “No” that is a live exposure gets stopped or contained before you leave the area. Stop is a right on this site. Restart is a decision. A named person makes it after the control is in place.

PREVENTION PLAYBOOK · STAIRS, STEPS, AND FALLS TO A LOWER LEVEL

Who owns it

Site leader	Funds handrails, guardrails, and platform ladders.
Facilities	Repairs stairs and nosings and keeps lighting working.
Supervisor	Enforces hands-free stair use and ladder rules.
Workers	Use the rail, face the vehicle, and tag out damaged ladders.
Safety lead	Audits stairs, docks, and ladders and runs fall-hazard training.

How to verify it is working in the field

- Walk every stairway. Check rails both sides and full length.
- Watch three people get out of a truck or off equipment. Count three-point contact.
- Ask a worker which stairs or steps they trust least.

TOOLBOX TALK STARTER

When you climb down from a truck or a ladder here, which hand is free?

Ask it at the job, not in the break room. Then listen. Write down what you hear and give it an owner before you leave.

IF YOU FIND A GAP

Block off any broken stair, damaged ladder, or unguarded edge today. Name the owner and date for the handrail, guardrail, or replacement. Then run the eight-step gap response at the front of this guide.

CHECK OUR WORK

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Sources retrieved and checked October 13, 2026. This guide is a practical summary for planning and self-audit. It is not legal or medical advice and does not replace the text of OSHA or state rules. State-plan states may have different or additional rules. Regulatory text is paraphrased. When this guide and a regulation disagree, the regulation controls. Injury figures are national two-year totals for private industry and will not match any one company's experience.

FREE FIELD TOOL · NEXT STEP

ONE TASK. SEVEN MINUTES.

The free 7-Minute Safety Walk is a one-page field tool. Pick one task running right now. Look up (what can fall), look at the hands (what can catch or cut), look at the load (how heavy, how far, how often), and look down (what can trip). Then ask the worker what they would fix first. It is the fastest way to find out whether the fixes in this guide are working at your site today.

Get the free 7-Minute Safety Walk →

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