

SAFETY FOCUS

WALKING AND WORKING SURFACES

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires employers to ensure that all places of employment, passageways, storerooms, service rooms, and walking-working surfaces are kept in a clean, orderly, and sanitary condition.

WHAT: A walking-working surface is defined as any horizontal or vertical surface on or through which an employee walks, works, or gains access to a work area or workplace location.

WHY: Improperly maintained and used walking and working surfaces is our number one source for falls, slips and trip hazards in the workplace. Most of these types of accidents can be prevented by proper housekeeping and maintenance of walking surfaces. These surfaces must be maintained in a safe condition.

HOW: Regular inspections should be conducted of all walking and working surfaces in the workplace. Things to look for when inspecting walking-working surfaces:

- Surfaces must be free of hazards such as sharp or protruding objects, loose boards, corrosion, leaks, spills, snow and ice
- Must support the maximum intended load for the surface
- Surfaces are maintained in a clean and, to the extent feasible, dry condition
- When wet processes are used, drainage must be maintained and, to the extent feasible, dry standing places, such as false floors, platforms, and mats must be provided
- A safe means of access and egress must be maintained to and from walking-working surfaces

Hazardous conditions on walking-working surfaces must be corrected or repaired before use by employees. If the condition cannot be repaired immediately, the hazard must be guarded to prevent use. Report hazardous conditions to your direct supervisor.

Winter Walking: Melting snow can freeze overnight, forming a thin layer of ice that is hard to see. The ground can then become very slippery when the ice starts to melt. No matter how well the snow is removed from parking lots or sidewalks there can still be potential for slippery walk areas. Training on safe winter walking can be found here: <https://utah.bridgeapp.com/learner/courses/424/slide/2720>

Issues related to maintenance of walking and working surfaces or hazardous conditions such as snow and ice should be submitted to Facilities Management: <https://facilities.utah.edu/requests-2/>

To report other potentially hazardous conditions, click on this link: <https://oehs.utah.edu/resource-center/forms/hazard-report>

