

AgSafe

COALITION FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY IN AGRICULTURE
COALICION PARA LA SALUD Y LA SEGURIDAD AGRICOLA

Preventing Slips and Trips: Script

AgSafe, Coalition for Health and Safety in Agriculture¹

The following safety module is intended to be used as a refresher safety awareness session and is in no way to be used as a substitute for job training nor proper equipment use.

Many of the injuries that result from falls can be avoided. The key is to become aware of the potential hazard and to avoid it whenever possible. Falls are the leading cause of fatal injuries around the house as well as a major cause of most agricultural injuries.

The safety modules may be used by anyone with the understanding that credit be given to AgSafe.

DON'T BE IN A HURRY

Trips and falls often occur while people are in a hurry, because they often take short cuts and don't pay attention to what they are doing. (See Figure 1.) We all have tried to jump across an obstacle instead of walking "the long way around" to our destination. These types of acts are unsafe. Learn to slow down and walk sure-footedly by avoiding potentially hazardous short-cuts.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR STEP

Avoid injuries by paying attention to where you are walking. (See Figure 2.) Learning to recognize hazards and avoid potential hazards saves time, money and injury. As mentioned previously, resist the temptation to take short-cuts because short-cuts are usually comprised of objects or routes not designed for foot traffic and often consist of unstable, shaky or slippery surfaces.



Figure 1. Don't be in a hurry

CLEAN UP SPILLS

Slippery surfaces often don't appear dangerous until you happen to step on them, and then it's too late. Clean up grease, water and other forms of spills as you notice them. Cover icy and greasy spots with sand or dirt or other types of absorbent material. (See Figure 3.)

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Figure 2. Pay attention to your step

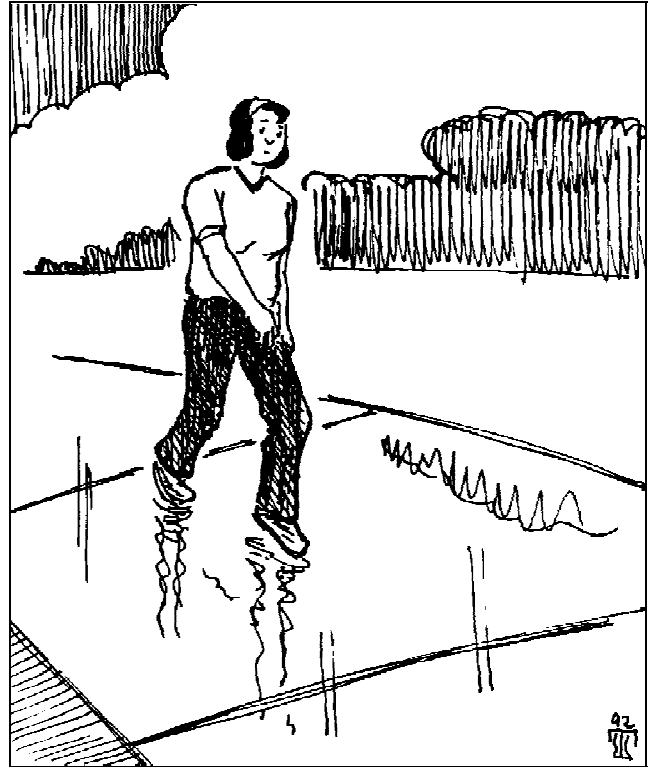


Figure 4. Practice walking safely

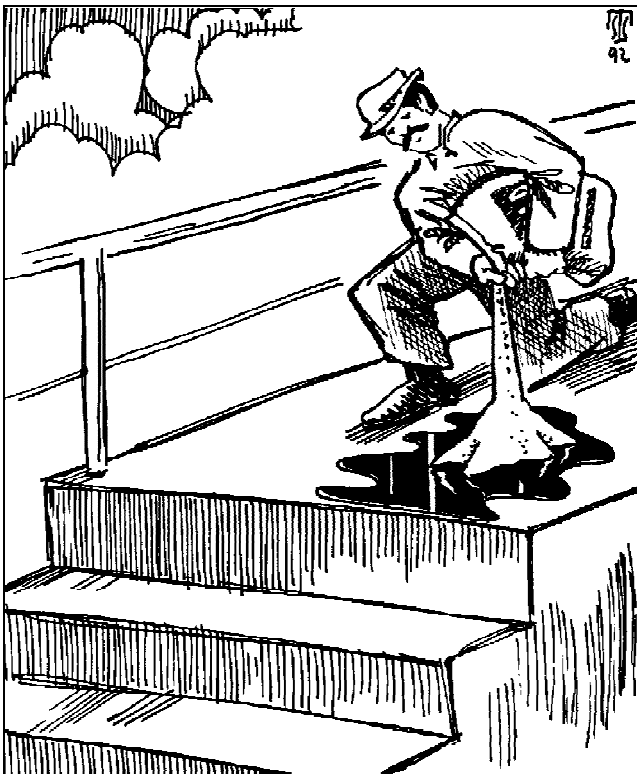


Figure 3. Clean up spills

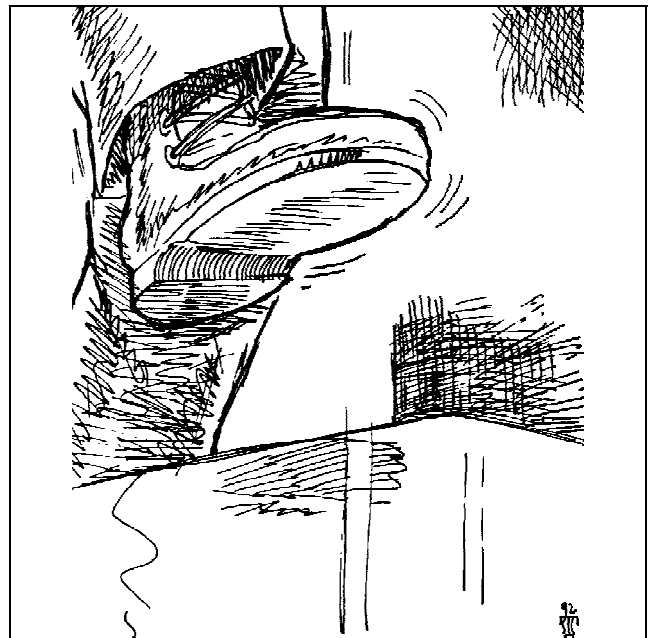


Figure 5. Wear shoes with slip-resistant soles

PRACTICE WALKING SAFELY

If you cannot avoid walking on slippery or wet surfaces, practice walking safely across them. Don't try to run, jump or slide across these slick surfaces. Instead, take slow, short steps with your toes pointed slightly outward. For additional balance, keep your

hands at your sides (not in your pockets) to support you if you begin to fall. (See Figure 4.) Remember that a freshly polished floor can also be very slick even though it doesn't usually appear hazardous.

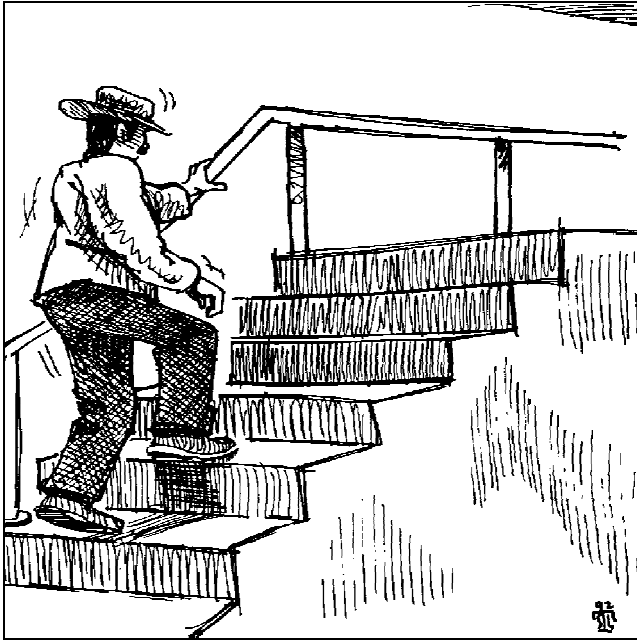


Figure 6. Climb stairs carefully

USE NONSKID SHOES AND SURFACES WHEN AVAILABLE

If you work in an area that has slippery surfaces, such as a milking shed or concrete nursery floor, wear shoes that have slip-resistant soles. (See Figure 5.) Ask your supervisor about the correct shoe for your job. Keep your shoes free from grease and oil. On large walkways, use mats or rough grade coverings to assist in minimizing falls.

MAINTAIN PROPER LIGHTING

Inadequate lighting can camouflage what is in your way, so replace light fixtures or bulbs that don't work. (See Figure 6.) When you enter a darkened room always turn on the light first, even if you stay only for a moment. Keep walkways clear of obstructions in areas that have poor lighting.

EXERCISE STAIR SAFETY

Stairs which are too steep or not steep enough can create the potential for trips and falls. Because it is very easy to lose your footing while climbing stairs, walk up and down stairs slowly. (See Figure 7.) Be cautious of worn or broken steps, and of insufficient lighting that may make it difficult to see properly. Never run up or down stairs, and avoid skipping steps. If you have to carry a load while climbing stairs, carry the load so it doesn't block your vision, and keep one hand free, if possible, to hold onto the wall railing.



Figure 7. Maintain proper lighting

INSPECT YOUR LADDER

Check your ladder to ensure the rungs are in good condition and that it has no cracks or broken parts. (See Figure 8.) If the ladder is equipped with a spreader that locks the ladder frame into position, make sure it is secured before you begin to climb. Most importantly, check to make sure the ladder is the correct height for the task at hand; this will prevent you from reaching too far forward or upward, which could cause you to become off balance.

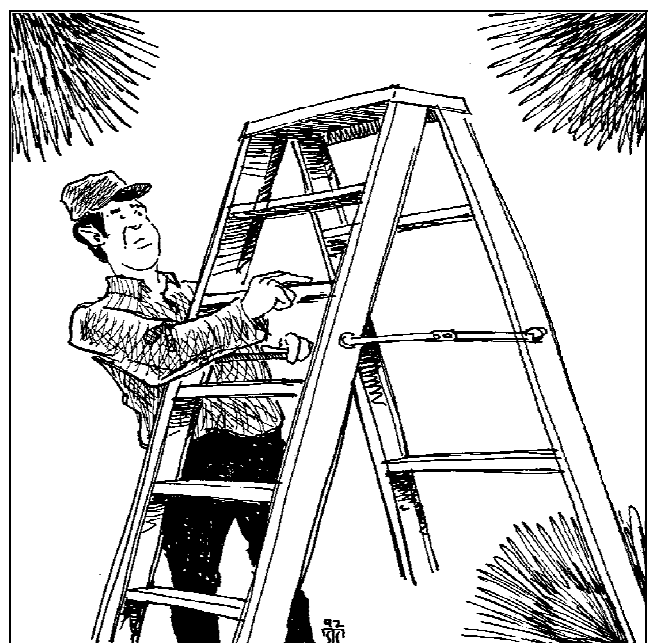


Figure 8. Inspect your ladder