



Exposure to falls in parking lots

What are they?

The parking lot fall exposure group includes all slip, trip or falls that occur in a parking lot. There are other kinds of falls that occur in a parking lot, like falls occurring while exiting a vehicle, but our focus here is on the act of falling while walking through a lot.

What is their impact?

Parking lot falls can result in a wide-range of injuries, from minor abrasions, cuts, sprains and bruises to more severe injuries like fractures and closed head injuries. Ankle/foot injuries and abrasions to the hands, knees, and face are the most common results of trips. Parking lot slips will typically result in musculoskeletal injuries to the wrists, head, neck, back or buttocks. Serious injuries in parking lots may leave the victim unable to get up and self-rescue. This leaves them at-risk during winter months, especially after dark unless help is nearby.

Why does it happen?

Full exposure to the elements makes a parking lot one of a company's more hazardous places. A parking lot fall is typically the result of an individual's at-risk behavior while walking. That is, for whatever reason, an employee is either not focusing on where they are walking, are unable to see their pathway or are taking shortcuts over or through otherwise unsafe conditions, like:

- Broken pavement
- Manhole covers
- Loose rocks and gravel
- Poor visibility
- Rain and standing water

Examples of at-risk behaviors that lead to falls in parking lots include:

- Shortcuts over or through hazardous conditions, like landscaping or water.
- Walking backwards
- Not focusing on where you are stepping
- Hurrying or running
- Carrying an object that obstructs your view of the pathway
- Being distracted and not paying attention to your surroundings
- Wearing improper footwear for the conditions



Does it happen?

Absolutely. In fact, falls that occur in parking lots are the second most common source of slip, trip and fall injuries in quantity (frequency) and third in degree of injury (severity).

What can we do about it?

There are several simple things you can do right now to minimize your exposure to falls in parking lots.

- Always focus on where you step. Conditions in parking lots can change rapidly. Watch where you are stepping to allow you to observe hazardous conditions.
- Do not carry items that block your view of the pathway. Take additional trips, if needed.
- Park near a light source if possible in the early mornings or nighttime hours to help you better see unsafe conditions.
- Manage your time to avoid running or hurrying through parking lots.
- Walk on the pavement. Avoid shortcuts over grass or landscaping that can become slippery or a tripping hazard.
- Avoid other simultaneous activities like reading while walking.
- Wear appropriate footwear. We recommend a low heeled, rubber-sole shoe for all condition traction.
- Choose a safe path. Take the time to step around an unsafe condition instead of through it.
- Help others. If you see a hazard that you can fix, fix it. Otherwise, report observed unsafe conditions for correction.
- Communicate. If you observe someone placing themselves at-risk of a parking lot fall, let them know.