



City Safe

A Guide To Assist In Training
Employees About:

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RAISING AWARENESS TO HELP REDUCE SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

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City Safe is a publication of the League of Kansas Municipalities and the Kansas Municipal Insurance Trust for the purpose of educating and informing cities about loss control methods and risk management. Contents herein are not intended to provide specific legal or medical advice. Readers should seek advice on specific concerns from a qualified professional.

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Note from the KMIT Staff...

Safety issues tend to be an overlooked aspect of local government. However, it is critically important that these issues be addressed. Poor safety practices lead to increased worker injuries, which increase overall municipal expenses. As expenses increase, the level of services that cities can offer to their respective communities is reduced. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the employer, employee and community, if safety breaches are constantly being identified and addressed.

Recently, IMA's Risk Control Consultant, Renee Rhodes, provided KMIT with a breakdown of its member city work comp claims -- specific to accident type for 2009, year-to-date.

The top two claims were caused by 1) strains, and 2) falling or slipping. Sixty-two percent of all injury claims appeared in one of those two categories. Twenty-six percent of claims during that time were as a result of falling or slipping. The cost associated with falling or slipping claims thus far in 2009, is nearly \$77,000. (see KMIT Claim Analysis by injury on page 5 and by department as it relates to these injury types, on page 7).

In recognizing Kansas' constantly-changing weather -- to include the rainy spring weather upon us -- this issue will focus on how to heighten awareness of slips, trips and falls. The next issue will focus on the number one cause of injury claims, which is strains (and the cost associated is more than \$107,000 year-to-date).

Those of us who serve as staff to the KMIT organization strive to do as much as possible to assist our member cities. KMIT believes in providing more than just competitive workers' compensation insurance to Kansas cities. It is dedicated to enhancing a safe workplace and to providing excellent claims management, loss prevention and on-site safety services in a cost-effective manner.

Remember, keeping city employees safe directly affects the bottom line regarding city work comp premium rates. By reducing safety hazards, cities are able to reduce their workers' compensation expenses, while at the same time, ensure long, healthy relationships with good workers.

Have a safe day!

*Sincerely,
The KMIT Staff*

Objective:

To emphasize the types of injuries associated with slips, trips and falls.

Introduction:

Slips, trips and falls are common occurrences in many work places. While some of these accidents are unforeseeable, many of them are avoidable, and occur as a result of carelessness, disorderly work areas and lack of attention to detail. It is important to pay close attention to this issue, because falls kill more than 17,000 people per year (19,650 in 2005). More than 800 of those deaths occurred while at work. Falls are one of the largest causes of accidental death, after traffic accidents and poisoning.

This issue of City Safe will focus on simple techniques, that when implemented, can significantly reduce slipping, tripping and falling safety hazards to employees.



Safety Procedures

There are a number of safety procedures you should follow to prevent accidents. None of these are very complicated. It shouldn't take very long before following these procedures will become a habit:

- Keep everything in its proper place and put things away after use.
- Repair or report any floor problems: loose or missing tiles, warped wood planks, or turned-up rug edges.
- Keep walkways and aisles clear of obstacles.
- Keep drawers closed.
- Dispose of trash promptly and properly.
- Don't leave machines, tools, or other materials on the floor.
- Block off and mark areas that are being cleaned or repaired.
- Keep cords, power cables and air hoses out of walkways.
- Clean up spills and leaks right away.
- Ensure walkways are visible before you move ahead. Use a flashlight when needed.

The way you move, and even dress, can make the difference between getting where you're going safely, and having an accident. Keep these tips in mind:

- Walk, don't run.
- Walk slowly, with a sliding motion, on slippery or uneven surfaces.
- Wear shoes with nonskid soles and flat heels.
- Beware of loose pant cuffs; you could trip over them.
- Don't carry a load you can't see over -- especially on stairs.
- Keep your hands at your sides, not in your pockets for balance.
- Use railings when climbing up or down stairs.
- When you sit in a chair, keep all four chair legs on the floor.
- Don't jump off of platforms or loading docks.
- Step around obstructions.



General Hazards

- Unsafe stairs
- Obstructions in walkways or on stairs
- Slippery or uneven surfaces
- Improper footwear
- Moving too fast
- Poor lighting
- Being tired or distracted
- Loose railings
- Engaging in horseplay
- Lack of attention to where you're going and what might be in your way

The last point is really the most important. If you look where you're going, you're more likely to get there in one piece. One more thing: Sometimes, even when you're careful, you can fall. But you can still try to keep from being injured seriously by "falling correctly." There are two ways to do it: One way is to roll with the fall. The other is to bend your elbows and knees so your legs and arms absorb the fall. If you do fall, it's a good idea to get medical attention. You can't always tell if something has been torn, sprained or broken.

Wrap Up

Slips, trips and falls are among the most common kinds of accidents. Even worse, they're among the most common kinds of accidents causing death or disability. So keep the work area clear -- especially aisles, walkways and stairs.

Make sure that stairs, ladders and guardrails are in good condition. Wear sensible shoes with nonskid soles and flat heels, and be especially careful around wet or slippery surfaces. And, most importantly, pay attention to where you are and what is going on around you.

Check the areas you're entering. Look for hazards. Keep your mind on what you're doing and where you're going. That's the best way to maintain your balance and your safety.

Suggested Safety Meeting Questions for Discussion:

1. What are some of the most common causes of slips, trips and falls?
2. What types of things does OSHA regulate to try to prevent slips, trips and falls?
3. What hazards can cause you to fall on stairs?
4. What's most likely to make you fall on level ground?
5. What kinds of situations can make floors dangerous?
6. What are some good housekeeping practices that can help prevent slips, trips and falls?
7. What kind of shoes should you wear to prevent slipping?
8. What's the best overall rule to follow so you won't slip, trip, or fall?
9. How do you "fall correctly"?
10. Are there any other questions?

Share the KMIT Claim Analysis charts on pages 5 and 7, as well as the KMIT facts below.

KMIT Facts About Slip and Fall Injuries, January 2009 - Present
Actual Cost for Claims - \$74,654, Listed by Category

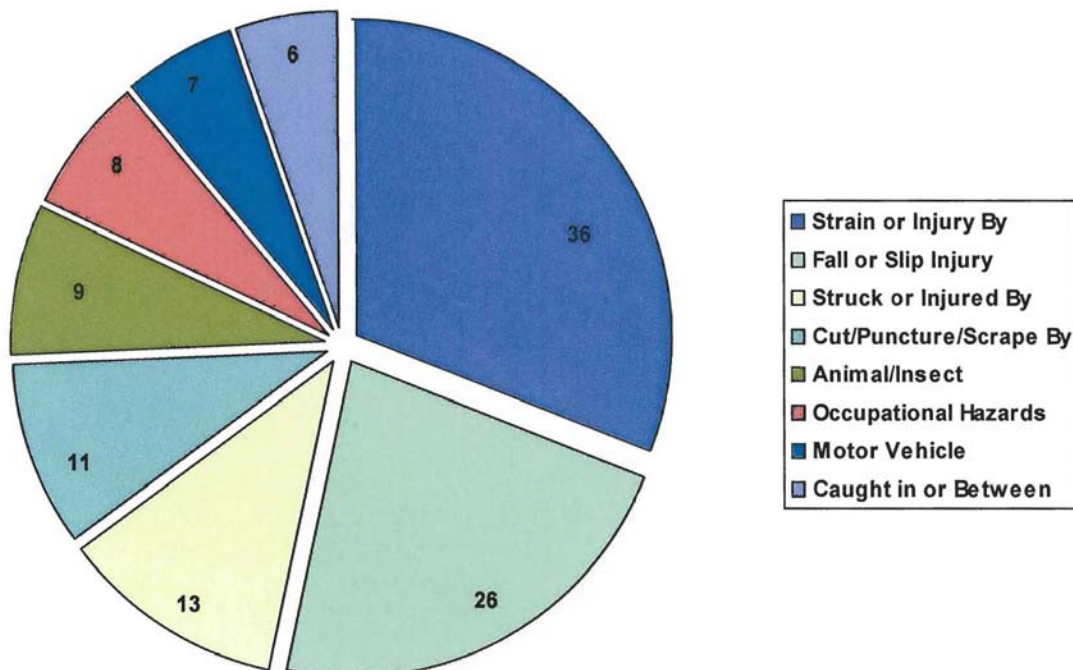
- From a different level - \$39,682
- From a ladder or scaffolding - \$949
- From liquid or grease spills - \$1,400
 - As a result of ice - \$2,800
 - From same level - \$29,823

KMIT Claim Analysis by Accident Type

Claims From 1/1/2009 Through 12/31/2009

City: All Cities , Department: All Departments , Claim Values: \$0 - \$100,000,000

NUMBER OF CLAIMS



Just as there are safety exercises to guard against specific types of accidents, there are many general precautions that an organization can take to increase their overall safety. Please consider the following safety checklist:

Safety Meeting Checklist

Management:

1. Do you have a safety meeting policy?
2. Do you enforce it?
3. Are supervisors kept up-to-date on new safety regulations?
4. Do you inform supervisors about company accident and injury rates?
5. Are supervisors trained to conduct safety meetings?
6. Do you make suggestions to supervisors on safety meeting topics?
7. Do you pay for safety meeting time?
8. Do you review supervisors' safety meeting plans and schedules?
9. Do you evaluate the success of safety meetings?
10. Do you have a program to recognize safety improvements?
11. Do you help supervisors plan safety meetings?
12. Do you have training materials available for supervisors to use?
13. Are supervisors informed about available training aids?
14. Do you participate in conducting safety meetings?
15. Do you sit in on some safety meetings as a participant?
16. Do you help supervisors evaluate and improve safety meetings?



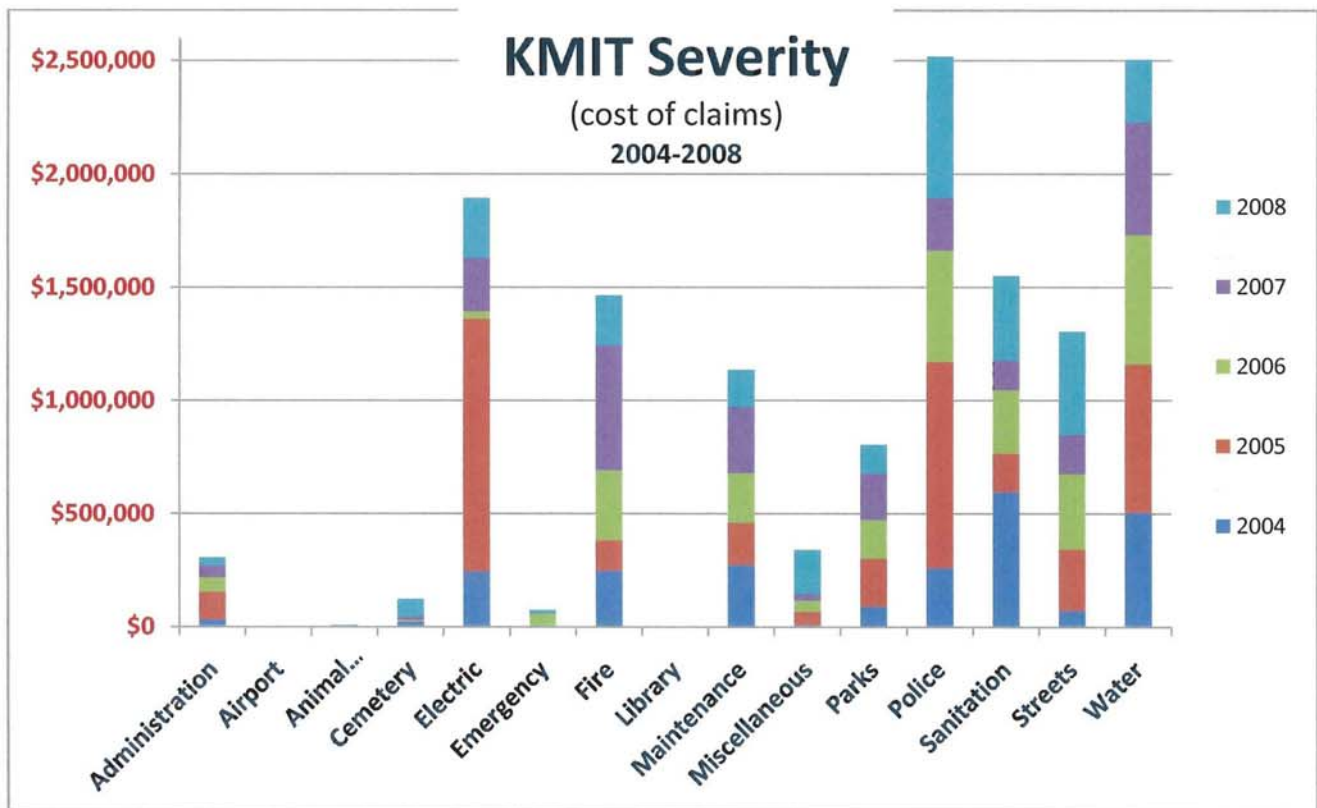
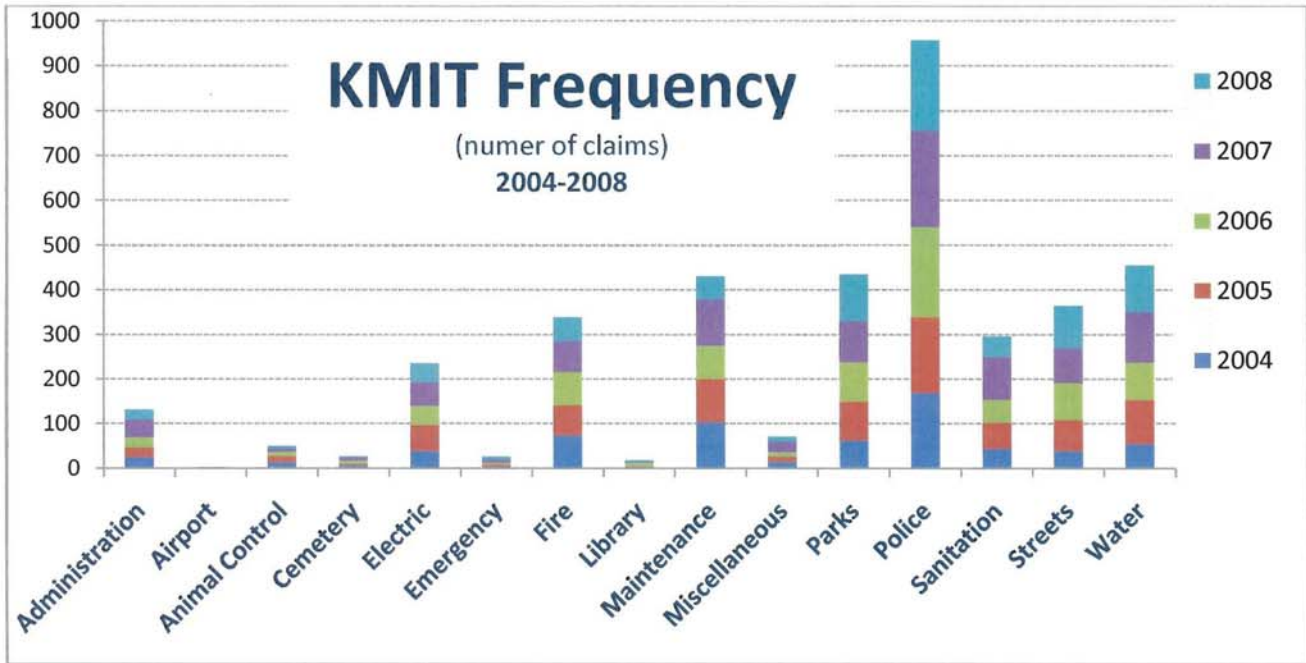
Supervisors:

1. Do you hold safety meetings regularly?
2. Do you keep track of new safety regulations and accident and injury statistics?
3. Do you schedule and plan safety meetings in advance?
4. Do you review your schedules and plans with management?
5. Are safety professionals and other supervisors consulted in developing safety meeting topics and formats?
6. Do you keep track of examples of safety compliance and problems in your department?
7. Does each safety meeting have an objective?
8. Do you outline an agenda and presentation for each meeting?
9. Are your presentations varied?
10. Do you tie each meeting to on-the-job examples?
11. Do you conduct regular, brief and informal safety meetings on the floor?
12. Are meetings set up to encourage practice and participation?
13. Do you evaluate the results of safety meetings?
14. Do you use evaluations to improve your meetings?

Did You Know?

KMIT and IMA have teamed up to offer valuable information geared towards supervisors. The KMIT website has a link titled ***KMIT Loss Prevention Training Tools***, which takes you to a wealth of information that you can utilize when holding “toolbox” safety meetings for your employees. Go to www.kmit.net and enter the Document Center.

KMIT Claims Graphs, by Department, 2004-2008



Publication Sources:

IMA of Kansas, Inc.
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National Safety Council
<http://www.nsc.org>

OSHA
<http://www.osha.gov>

Safe-T-Tips

According to the National Safety Council, only motor-vehicle crashes and poisoning cause more unintentional injury (accidental) deaths. One in five visitors to a hospital emergency room for an injury is there because of a fall. According to the Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC), more people died as a result of tripping on a level surface than in mountain climbing. More falling deaths result from stairs and steps, according to the CPSC. Beds rate second, while ladders are in third place.



To reduce injuries on stairs and steps, consider these modifications:

- Make sure stair height and tread widths are adequate, and each step is identical in size.
- Install a second handrail if the stairs are wide enough.
- Install light switches at the top and bottom of stairs.
- Be sure carpeting is tightly woven and installed so it doesn't move or slide.

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