STAIR AND HANDRAIL SAFETY

Each of us uses stairs every day whether at home or at work. We are so used to it that we don’t think of the potential hazards. In Canadian workplaces, there are thousands of injury claims annually with average claim costs in the $20,000 range and many work days. That does not count similar injuries that occur at home.

One of the most important things you can do when ascending or descending stairs is to utilize the handrail. Holding on to the handrail gives you at least two points of contact and balance at all times. Be sure to report any handrails that are loose.

Common stairway incidents:

<table>
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<th>Cause</th>
<th>Prevention tips</th>
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| Carrying objects   | • Many stairway accidents are caused when people carry a load that is too much for them to handle, or the load obscures their vision such that they miss a step.  
• Objects should be small enough to allow one hand to be free to hold the railing.  
• Get help if you have to carry something up or down stairs.  
• Make sure you can see where you are going. |
| Distractions       | • Never read, text, or use email while using stairs.  
• Focus on the stairs, not conversations or other distractions that may be present. |
| Rushing            | • Never run up or down stairs.  
• Take only one step at a time. |
| Lighting           | • If a light bulb has burned out in the stairway area, it should be reported or replaced right away.  
• Lights situated at a bad angle can produce blinding glare that could cause a mishap. |
| Housekeeping       | • Stairways should be kept clear of trash and other tripping hazards.  
• Stairways are not storage areas, and any obstructions should be reported to your supervisor or cleared immediately. |
| Weather Conditions | • If the stairs are located outside, be extremely careful if it is raining or snowing.  
• Report ice/slippery patches |

If injured:
- Contact supervisor ASAP and seek medical attention
- Complete online WCB Worker report if required
- Complete OARS report or ensure your supervisor does so