



Can You Afford the High Cost of Slips and Falls?

Businesses, whether big or small, can't afford to be laissez faire about safety. The negative impacts are too far-reaching. Accidents cause pain and suffering, lost workdays and wages, and unplanned-for medical bills for employees just trying to do their jobs. The companies that employ them experience steep costs in the form of Workers' Compensation insurance claims, rising premiums, lawsuits and litigation, property damage, administrative costs and lost productivity. Everybody loses.

According to the National Safety Council's Injury Facts, work injury costs for 2017 totaled \$161.5 billion.ⁱ And Liberty Mutual's 2018 Workplace Safety Index reported that serious nonfatal workplace injuries (which resulted in 6 or more lost days from work) accounted for over \$58 billion in direct U.S. Workers' Comp costs—that's more than one billion dollars a week!ⁱⁱ

Slips and falls are among the most ubiquitous of workplace injuries—and deaths. Falls are the third leading cause of injury-related death on the job, according to the National Safety Councilⁱⁱⁱ. Falls account for over 8 million hospital emergency room visits, representing the leading cause of visits (21.3%), and slips and falls account for over 1 million

visits, or 12% of total falls^{iv}. As well, there is even a category of injury due to slips and trips without a fall that nevertheless resulted in costs of another \$2.35 billion^v.

Slips and falls are a hazard for just about every type of work environment, according to the following statistics compiled by Arbill SafetyCare: 65% of fall-related injuries occur as a result of falls from same level. The services, wholesale, and retail trade industries together accounted for over 60% of injuries that resulted from same level falls. The manufacturing sector alone accounted for 16 percent of injuries that resulted from same-level falls^{vi}.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Centers for Disease Control report estimates that each slip and fall incident carries a cost of \$40,000^{vii}.

The good news is—slip and fall injuries are largely preventable. Instituting a comprehensive safety program does involve the investment of time and money, a serious and long-term commitment to creating a safer, as close to accident-free work environment as possible. But many larger businesses are seeing the value, and the investment is paying off. For example, retail stores and supermarkets are spending up to \$450 million per year to defend against slip and fall claims, according to the National Floor Safety Institute^{viii}.

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In fact, the expert managing of safety costs has actually become a profit center for some smart businesses who can cut their losses with large-scale safety best practices initiatives including Safety Footwear programs, rigorous ongoing training and continuing education programs, strict housekeeping/floor cleaning and self-inspection protocols.^{ix} Creating a culture of safety and continuous overall improvement in working conditions is paying off for those who are proactive, organized and committed to preventing workplace injuries and accidents.

Not only is investing in a comprehensive safety program the right thing to do for your fellow employees, it's as healthy for the company's bottom line as it is for your team. In choosing prevention over complacency, with a goal of lowering accident and incident rates, everybody wins.

What is your organization's level of risk when it comes to occupational injury? A useful tool to estimate your company's potential costs can be found on the U.S. Department of Labor's OSHA website^x. This helpful free web tool can help aid employers in assessing the impact of occupational injuries on their bottom line. The Safety Pays worksheet takes into account the company's profit margin, the average costs of an injury and an indirect cost multiplier to estimate total costs. Visit <https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/safetypays/estimator.html> to calculate the estimated impact on your company's profitability.

How was your score? Is it time to reevaluate your company's safety plan? Can you afford the price of inaction?

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ⁱⁱ <https://business.libertymutualgroup.com/business-insurance/Documents/Services/Workplace%20Safety%20Index.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.nsc.org/work-safety/safety-topics/slips-trips-falls>

^{iv} <https://www.cleanlink.com/hs/article/The-Cost-Of-Slips-And-Falls-For-Facilities--21685>

^v <https://www.ehstoday.com/safety/workplace-falls-pose-danger-economy-well-workers>

^{vi} <https://www.arbill.com/arbill-safety-blog/painful-costs-of-slips-trips-and-falls>

^{vii} <https://www.arbill.com/arbill-safety-blog/painful-costs-of-slips-trips-and-falls>

^{viii} <https://www.cleanlink.com/hs/article/The-Cost-Of-Slips-And-Falls-For-Facilities--21685>

^{ix} <http://gfsngroup.com/information/falls-prevention-agencies/>

^x <https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/safetypays/index.html>

This information is for illustrative purposes only and is not meant to be a substitute for, or a legal interpretation of, occupational safety and health standards. Please refer to the appropriate state and federal codes of regulations for detailed and exact information, specifications, and exceptions.

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