



Stairwell Safety

Safety Talk

June, 2013

Special points of interest:

- *Always use the hand-rail. Use both hand-rails whenever possible*
- *Take your time. Do not rush*
- *Avoid carrying bulky items that block your vision or carrying objects that require both hands*
- *Do not skip steps*
- *Be extra careful if wearing bifocal or progressive lens glasses*
- *Do not place rugs at the very bottom or top of steps*
- *Be on guard for single steps when entering and exiting because the sudden change can be a hazard*
- *Use extra care ascending/descending steps when wearing footwear such as heels, sandals, athletic shoes, slippers; be cautious when wearing cuffed pants*
- *Chances of falling increase by inattention, illness, fatigue, haste, and use of drugs or alcohol.*

Utilizing Three Point Contact in Stairwells Prevents Accidents

Three point contact means having three out of four of your limbs attached to a surface feature. To maintain three point contact in a stairwell, have both feet on the stairs with one hand holding the handrail while ascending or descending stairs. Use both hands on each handrail when possible.

When reaching for the

handrail, reach ahead of your body, not behind. If using three point contact and a slip does occur, it is easier to catch yourself without causing injury.

Stairs with just one or two steps (usually located outdoors) are associated with a high number of falls so always utilize the handrail in these situations.

Most falls on stairs occur on the first or last step so be sure to maintain three point contact for the duration of your stairwell travel.

Three point contact is a best practice that can be used off the job as well. Escalators and residential stairwells provide excellent opportunities to utilize three point contact!

Stairwell Safety Inspection

Inspection of the stairwell area should always be included in the monthly/quarterly building safety inspection. Common items to look for include:

- Worn or broken treads
- Riser height irregularity
- Loose or missing

handrails

- Loose or worn carpeting
- Lighting
- Area needs to be free of all obstacles and slipping hazards
- Exterior steps/stairs will require additional precautions

