FALL PREVENTION - GENERAL

It's not the fall that hurts you - it's the landing. That old joke is usually true, but not in every case. Sometimes, it is the falling that hurts you.

When you slip, trip, or otherwise start to fall, you may twist, or reach out to grab something. You may even stop the fall by regaining your balance because of the twist or by being able to catch onto something. But the twisting or the grabbing may themselves cause an injury - in fact, this is exactly what happens in a lot of the injuries such as back strains, wrenched shoulders, etc.

Also, people often put out a hand to break their fall - that's what breaks their wrist or arm.

Once the fall gets started, we can't prevent the landing, except by doing something that can also cause an injury. So we need to find a way to prevent the fall itself.

Floor surfaces, uneven or worn stairs, and a lot of other unsafe conditions can make people fall. But there are two basic problems everyone can help solve: poor housekeeping, and rushing.

Keep floors, stairs, and all walking and working surfaces clean and clear of obstructions. If you drop things on the floor, or see things that other people have dropped, pick them up so that someone else won't fall. Food on the floor, oil, inks, pencils and paper clips, debris, extension cords, loose carpets, all need to be cleaned up or repaired. Pallets, boxes, and other such objects need to be kept out of aisles.

It's everybody's job to clean these things up, simply because everyone else's safety is your responsibility. If you cannot do something yourself to correct a problem, you need to immediately report it to your supervisor so that it can be taken care of.

By rushing, we mean not only moving too fast in work areas or on stairs, but also taking the short cuts we take when we rush. Like carrying too big a load, so that we cannot see well around it. Like cutting through a working area instead of staying in the aisle. Like leaving things in aisles or just around corners, for other people to fall over.