



HEALTH, SAFETY,
& ENVIRONMENTAL



SAFETY ALERT

Alert #: SA 44-26

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Essential Behavior 2.9 Watching Where Walking

Over the past several weeks, we have seen an increase in **ankle** and **knee** injuries caused by employees stepping into uneven surfaces, holes, soft ground, deck irregularities, and other walking hazards. While these incidents required only first aid treatment, they could have easily resulted in OSHA recordable injuries, restricted duty, lost time and lengthy recoveries. Many incidents like these typically occur during routine tasks, not because the work itself is hazardous, but because our attention shifts away from where we are placing our feet.

LIFE EBI 2.9 Watching Where Walking:

This Essential Behavior reminds us to intentionally focus on our path of travel before and while moving. **Every step matters.**

Before You Walk:

During the **JSEA** and **Safe to Start Process**, crews should identify and discuss:

- Keep your eye on your path of travel.
- Look ahead and scan your path of travel for uneven surfaces, holes, hoses, tools, grating, debris, or slippery surfaces.
- Slow down. Rushing increases the likelihood of missing hazards.
- Avoid distractions. Do not walk while focused on paperwork, mobile devices, or conversations.
- Take deliberate steps, especially when transitioning between different walking surfaces or elevations.
- Go around obstructions instead of stepping over them.
- Never assume the walking surface below a tarp, liner, mat or vegetation is clear.
- Use designated walkways whenever possible.
- Wear appropriate footwear that provides good traction and ankle support.
- Report or correct walking hazards immediately so the next person isn't exposed or potentially injured.
- Maintain good housekeeping. Keeping walkways free of hoses, tools, materials, and debris.

OSHA requires employers to maintain walking/working surfaces free of hazards and to inspect and correct unsafe conditions before employees use them. If conditions change throughout the shift, conduct a **Safety Pause**, Stop Work, Reassess, and update the JSEA and have another Safe to Start discussion before resuming work.

Remember:

The purpose of the JSEA and Safe to Start Process is not simply to complete paperwork, it's to identify hazards before they become incidents. Every task begins with movement, and every movement presents an opportunity to recognize a hazard, and mitigate it before it becomes an incident.

Ask Yourself:

- Is my walking path free of hazards?
- What hazards are present?
- Before stepping onto a covered surface. What hazards could be hidden beneath the surface?
- Have conditions changed since the last time I walked through the area?

Key Takeaway:

Walking is a task. When moving around a worksite, treat walking with the same level of attention and hazard awareness as any other work activity.

Think Before Every Step! Your next step could prevent your next injury.

Looking, Intervening, Facilitating & Eliminating at-risk behaviors and unsafe conditions to enhance the quality of **LIFE**.

Proper use of the **GIS LIFE Processes** can help to create a **FAIL-SAFE** Work Environment

