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Stairway Safety

In North America hundreds of people die and tens of thousands people get injured every year from the falls on stairs. The American National Council on Compensation Insurance estimated in 2001-2002 that the cost of such fall injuries was second only to those caused by motor vehicles.

The vast majority of stairway falls result from a loss of balance and a very common contributing factor is neglecting to use handrails.

Three Point Contact

Three-point contact refers to moving on a surface and to how many of your limbs are reliably attached to a surface feature. For example, both hands on a rail and a foot on the step, or both feet on step(s) and a hand on the stair rail. Etc. In this case, three-point contact for stairs means holding both stair rails one with each hand and using one foot when stepping up/down the stairs.

Visibility on stairs

Improving visibility on stairs significantly reduces the risk for common mishaps caused by misjudging distances. Otherwise you can trip on a step or miss it completely. You can catch a heel on the edge of a step. Such mishaps are a routine cause of twisted ankles, sprained knees or more serious injuries incurred by a total fall.

- Recommended illumination should be at the minimum 50 lux level.
- Use angular lighting and color contrast to improve depth perception.
- Use matte finishes on the treads to avoid glare.
- Avoid patterned carpeting that may visually hide differences in depth.
- Be very cautious on stairs if you are wearing bifocal glasses.

Work activity

- Use any means to persuade people to grasp the handrail while either ascending or descending stairs.
- Avoid carrying objects with both hands.
- Do not carry bulky objects that block your vision.



SAFETY ALERT