

SAFETY MEMO

February 21st, 2022 – Falls on the same level



Did you know?

Definition and origin

Falls from the same level are the second leading cause of accidents at work, after manual handling. They include slips, trips, missteps and any other loss of balance even if there is no fall, on a flat surface or with a reduced level break (sidewalk, inclined plane, etc.).



These hazards are clearly not dangerous as a moving tool, corrosive product, or high voltage source can be. Considered independently, the elements that will cause a level fall appear harmless (objects on the ground, variation in ground level, etc.), as a result, the employee will not therefore be naturally alerted and attentive to these elements.

Falls occur when employees are traveling and are most often the result of the combination of several factors from different origins:

- Material: poor condition of the floors with low slip resistance, poor access system to traffic lanes, vehicles, machines,
- Environmental: unforeseen obstacles, hardly or not visible, ill-adapted lighting environments, insufficient lighting,
- Organizational: urgent work, poor management of schedules, too many simultaneous tasks,
- Individual: non-compliance with instructions, non-detection of danger, little or no knowledge of the work situation.

Preventative Approach

The risks of falls on the same level are often trivialized and accidents considered inevitable. They are sometimes boiled down to unfortunate coincidence, clumsiness, or lack of attention.



One objective of the prevention approach is to set up information and awareness actions to overcome this poor perception in order to deal with the risk effectively.

The risk assessment, carried out in a participatory manner, makes it possible to identify work situations that expose employees to the risk of falls on the same level. It will make it possible to define the prevention actions adapted to each situation. The involvement of employees

in this assessment is therefore essential through their knowledge of the field. The analysis of accidents and near misses linked to falls on the same level is another important element in determining these preventive actions.

This approach must therefore integrate a global analysis and not be limited to the simple removal of an identified source of danger. It can be based on the following three lines of thought:

- The workspace,
- The physical atmosphere likely to influence attention skills,
- Employee activity and work organization.

Prevention Measures

To limit the risk of falls, various measures must be put in place from the design stage in securing access, optimizing lighting, etc. but also monitored throughout the life of the company. These possible actions are:



- Actions on the workspace: traffic lanes, location of equipment, floor space,
- Actions on floors: cleaning, installation of non-slip coverings,
- Actions on the working environment: lighting, noise and temperature,
- Actions on the organization of work: anticipation, preparation, planning, task analyzes,
- Employee awareness,
- Installation of signs and collective (handrail) and individual (safety shoes) protection.

To effectively fight against falls on the same level, it is therefore necessary to transform their representation within the company, to propose an adapted prevention approach and to consider the specificities of falls on the same level and the situations of job.

