

Stairways are a very common walking surface in most workplaces. Employers must take measures in their workplaces to protect employees from slip, trip and fall hazards on any walking/working surface and employees have a responsibility to use stairways correctly, as intended.

OSHA Standard 1910.28(b)(11)(i) states that the employer must ensure *each employee exposed to an unprotected side or edge of a stairway landing that is 4 feet (1.2 m) or more above a lower level is protected by a guardrail or stair rail system.*

- Each flight of stairs having at least 3 treads and at least 4 risers must be equipped with stair rail systems and handrails.
- Except for the entrance, stairway floor openings must be guarded by a standard railing on all exposed sides.

Employers are responsible for ensuring all stairways that are in use on the job site are safe. Workers should alert management to any unsafe issues or potential hazards noticed on or near stairways.

The majority of stairway incidents occur when a worker is not paying attention, they are rushing and they are not watching their footing.



- Never carry a load with both hands while going up or down the stairs.
- Make sure your shoes are tied before using any stairway.
- When walking with others, set a good example by walking up and down the stairs carefully while using the handrail.
- Report or clean up spills or trash found on the stairs.
- Report any situation in which there is insufficient lighting provided on any workplace stairway, indoors or outdoors.
- Never run up or down the stairs and avoid distractions like reading a newspaper or looking at your cell phone.

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