

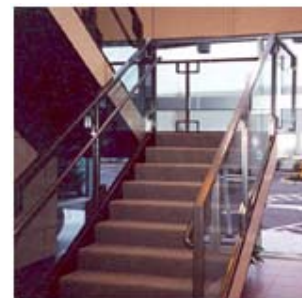


26 March, 2010

### Ten "steps" to stairway safety

Recently one of our colleagues lost his balance on stairs and hurt his foot which caused him to miss office. When asked about details of the incident he confessed that he was not holding the handrails.

The stairs in your home and in your office — the ones you climb up and down every day — can be dangerous. When seniors fall, the consequences can be severe and long-lasting. Most stair-related injuries occur on stairs with which the victim feels familiar with— such as those in one's home or office.



#### Why Do People Fall?

Health, environmental and behavioural reasons are contributing factors.

**Health factors** include eyesight problems, frailty, drowsiness, loss of balance and an inactive lifestyle.

**Environmental factors** include poor design, construction and maintenance of stairs; nonexistent or dysfunctional handrails; poor lighting; and other visual features of stairs such as the tread surfaces.

**Behavioural factors** include lack of concentration e.g. using cell phone, skipping steps, running up or down the stairs, carrying something while using stairs, unsuitable footwear, and unfamiliarity with the stairs.

#### Ten "steps" to stairway safety

1. Use the handrail. All stairways should have handrails on both sides.
2. Avoid use of Cell phones on stairs.
3. Always have one hand free to hold onto a handrail.
4. Install bright lights and on/off switches at the top and bottom of each stairwell.
5. If your steps have a smooth surface, install anti-slip tread to provide safer traction.
6. Keep stairways clear of all objects.
7. Beware of single step. Small changes in levels can be hazardous.
8. Be aware of your footwear. Take extra caution on steps when wearing athletic shoes, high heels, open-toe sandals, furry slippers or synthetic socks.
9. Avoid carrying vision blocking loads.
10. Do not put throw rugs at the top or bottom of a stairway.

**“Take your next step with care... Be Safe”**