



UNEVEN TERRAIN AND OUTDOOR TRIP HAZARDS

TOOLBOX TALK SERIES – ACCIDENT PREVENTION

July 2025

Video Link: [Uneven Surfaces, Expect the Unexpected.](#)

After the video, we'll discuss how this applies specifically to your roles in the Town of Perinton.

Working outdoors often means dealing with natural terrain, construction zones, or temporary work setups. Unlike indoor environments, outdoor worksites present **uneven, unpredictable surfaces** that increase the risk of **slips, trips, and falls**—the leading causes of workplace injuries.

Common Outdoor Hazards

- **Uneven ground:** Rocks, roots, holes, ruts, and soft soil.
 - **Slopes and inclines:** Can lead to loss of footing or rolling equipment.
 - **Temporary surfaces:** Gravel, plywood walkways, mats, or scaffold boards may shift.
 - **Obstacles:** Tools, materials, hoses, and debris left in walk paths.
 - **Poor visibility:** Early morning, dusk, or shaded areas can hide trip hazards.
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Risk Prevention Tips

1. **Inspect the Work Area Daily**
 - Walk the site before starting.
 - Mark or correct hazards like holes, loose boards, or drop-offs.
2. **Use Proper Footwear**
 - Wear sturdy, slip-resistant boots with ankle support—no sandals or worn-out shoes.
3. **Mark or Barricade Known Hazards**
 - Use cones, tape, signage, or barricades to alert others to risks.
 - Bright paint can highlight trip points.
4. **Plan Safe Paths of Travel**
 - Use established walkways when possible.



- Avoid walking across wet grass, steep slopes, or ungraded terrain.
 - 5. **Maintain Good Housekeeping**
 - Keep walkways clear of debris, cords, and tools.
 - Don't let temporary obstacles become permanent ones.
 - 6. **Be Alert to Changing Conditions**
 - Rain, heat, or construction work can quickly alter ground conditions.
 - Re-inspect the area after weather changes or equipment movement.
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What to Watch For

- Fatigue and distraction often lead to falls—especially in hot weather.
 - Rushing to complete a task often causes workers to ignore hazards.
 - Vehicle and equipment operators should also watch for soft ground or unstable footing.
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Discussion Questions

- Have you ever tripped or nearly fallen on an outdoor worksite?
 - What are some areas of our site that need better marking or correction?
 - How do we report and address outdoor trip hazards here?
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Takeaway Message

Uneven ground and outdoor hazards are unavoidable—but injuries are not. Stay alert, mark hazards, use the right gear, and keep your work area tidy to prevent slips, trips, and falls.



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