

Slips and Trips: Temporary Walkways

Todd Jerome Jenkins | v1.0 | October 12, 2026 | Discussion + field verification

Why this matters

A route can change between arrival and lunch. A delivery, hose or wet surface can turn yesterday's clear path into today's exposure.

Objective: Verify a usable walking route before the next work phase.

Key hazards or failure points

Loose coverings; wet surfaces; uneven transitions; trailing leads; poor visibility; detours into equipment movement.

Practical controls

- Keep passageways clear and in repair. Control the source of contamination and use the approved cleanup or repair method.
- Establish an approved alternative before closing a route. Coordinate deliveries, leads and waste so they do not defeat access.
- Assign responsibility for maintaining the route and communicating changes, including the return journey and emergency access.

Verify It in the Field

From safe access, compare the whole route with the current plan; stop at unknown surfaces or restricted sections.

Inspect transitions, coverings and visibility against site requirements. Obtain technical assessment for uncertain support; do not test it by stepping onto it.

Ask an affected worker to identify the open route and who will restore or reassess it after the next delivery.

Stop and reassess

Hold access for an unsafe surface, blocked route or detour into another hazard. Protect the area, correct the condition and verify the route before reopening.

Ask the crew

1. What changes our route next?
2. Where could a detour create a worse exposure?
3. Who confirms that the route can reopen?

Use this HOP tool — Job-site review: Choose the route the crew will use next. From safe access, name one condition that has changed and one that could change during the task. Assign who will verify the correction and tell everyone when the route is usable.

Sources: OSHA 1926.25, 1926.250, 1926.1051; DOE Vol. 2, pp. 8–9. HOP concepts adapted from DOE-HDBK-1028-2009, Vol. 2 (June 2009). No claim to original U.S. Government work; no government endorsement implied.

Free next step: JHA/JSA planning and field-verification worksheet

Expanded guidance and separate forms: toddjeromejenkins.com/toolbox-talks/slips-trips-temporary-walkways