



DMM Safety Alert: Trips and Falls (Slips, Too)

In May 2009, a contractor employee was seriously injured as he attempted to step over a silt fence that was located between an equipment parking area and an employee parking area. A section of the fence was partially loose and only 22 inches high as opposed to its normal 30 inches, and had become a travelway between the 2 parking areas. While crossing the fence, the injured worker caught his right foot in the fence, stumbled and fell. He landed hard on the side of his right foot, breaking both the tibia and fibula, and tearing ligaments in his right ankle. The employee was transported to the hospital where he underwent surgery for his injuries. At present, it is anticipated that he will have to stay off the foot for 6 weeks and may be off work for 6 months. Injuries from slips, trips and falls continue to be a major cause of accidents at mine sites both in Virginia and nationwide. To avoid these types of accidents, all miners are reminded of the following safe practices:

- Areas containing trip and fall hazards that cannot be removed, should not be used as travelways.
- Always maintain sure footing and good balance when climbing over or around objects. Handholds (railings) should be provided where there is a potential hazard/risk of falling.

➤ **Virginia Safety and Health Regulation for Mineral Mining 4 VAC 25-40-1810 states, “Safe means of access shall be provided and maintained to all work locations.”**

➤ **From May 2007 to May 2009, half (5 of 10) of all serious injury accidents in Virginia were in the “slips, trips and falls” category.**

