

Whether you are a parcel delivery driver or a courier, chances are, you spend a significant amount of time behind the wheel and are faced with a wide range of driving-related hazards every day. However, you also face an abundance of hazards once you stop your delivery vehicle to make a delivery and make your way to home or business and back to your vehicle. At the very top of the list of hazards that you face while outside of your vehicle are hazards associated with slips, trips, and falls. They include physical hazards such as slippery surfaces, uneven pavement, or holes. They also include behavioral hazards, such as hurrying, distractions and complacency. These hazards are compounded by the reality that some packages can be heavy and others can be awkward to handle and even obstruct your view of where you are walking.

This Safety Minute is intended to offer advice that will help keep you vertical.



## **ENTER/EXIT WITH CAUTION**

Many falls in your industry occur when the delivery driver is entering or exiting the vehicle. With that in mind, avoid the tendency to catapult yourself from your vehicle as quickly as you can with the package in-hand. You may think that you are getting the job done more quickly when you do that, but try slowing down while entering and exiting your vehicle for a week and you will see that any difference in your efficiency is negligible (at best). Instead, take your time as you enter and exit your vehicle and anticipate surfaces that might be slippery due to damp conditions on that vehicle floor, on the ground, just outside of your vehicle, or on the sole of your footwear. Look for curbs, holes or uneven surfaces before you step down from your vehicle and do your best to use any available grab bars to maintain balance and prevent a fall.

## **CHOOSE THE PATH WISELY**

Before exiting your vehicle, choose the path of travel that you will take to your destination. The shortest distance is not always the best choice. Consider hazards such as roots, holes that might be obscured, or damp grass that might make your shoes slippery once you get back in your vehicle.

## **WEAR APPROPRIATE FOOTWEAR**

Wear a non-slip shoe that provides ample traction to prevent a slip or fall while working in wet conditions such as rain. Additionally, a shoe that supports the ankle is recommended to protect against ankle injuries while working on uneven surfaces.

## **AVOID VISUAL OBSTRUCTIONS**

If you have a package that will obstruct your view, use a dolly that allows for an unobstructed view. If that is not feasible, take extra time to identify hazards along your selected path. You may even need to stop, turn sideways and look at your selected path a few times on your way to the customer's door.

## **SLOW DOWN**

Understandably, as a parcel delivery or courier, you are incentivized to perform your job efficiently, and that often involves making deliveries quickly. However, quickness at the expense of safety is not advantageous for you or your employer. Find a pace that is a happy medium – one that allows you to be efficient, but does not jeopardize your safety in the process.

## **DON'T JUMP**

When delivering a package on a porch or dock, don't jump. Similarly, when descending stairs, don't skip steps. These things not only increase the likelihood of a fall, but they also place significant stress on your knees.

## **TRIP HAZARDS ARE EVERYWHERE**

Uneven pavement, extension cords, toys, roots, holes, curbs, entry rugs... you could likely make a mile-long list of trip hazards that you face on the job every day. Adopt the mindset of identifying them as trip hazards, and you will inherently be more cautious around them.

## **STAY SAFE – STAY VERTICAL!**