

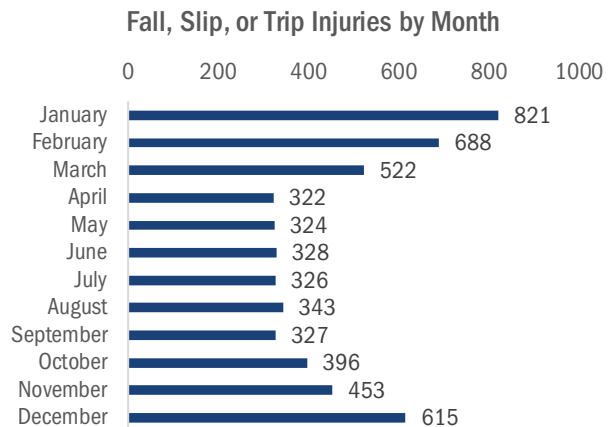
## SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

Falls (including slips and trips) are one of the leading causes of injury for Montana workers, accounting for over 22% of all workplace injuries reported to the Montana Department of Labor & Industry (DLI) in the past 10 years.<sup>1</sup> While falls can happen at any time, the risk is particularly high in winter, when snow and ice reduce traction on walking surfaces; data indicates falls account for over 33% of all injuries experienced during the winter months. This newsletter examines the prevalence of falls in the workplace and provides guidance to reduce fall risk.

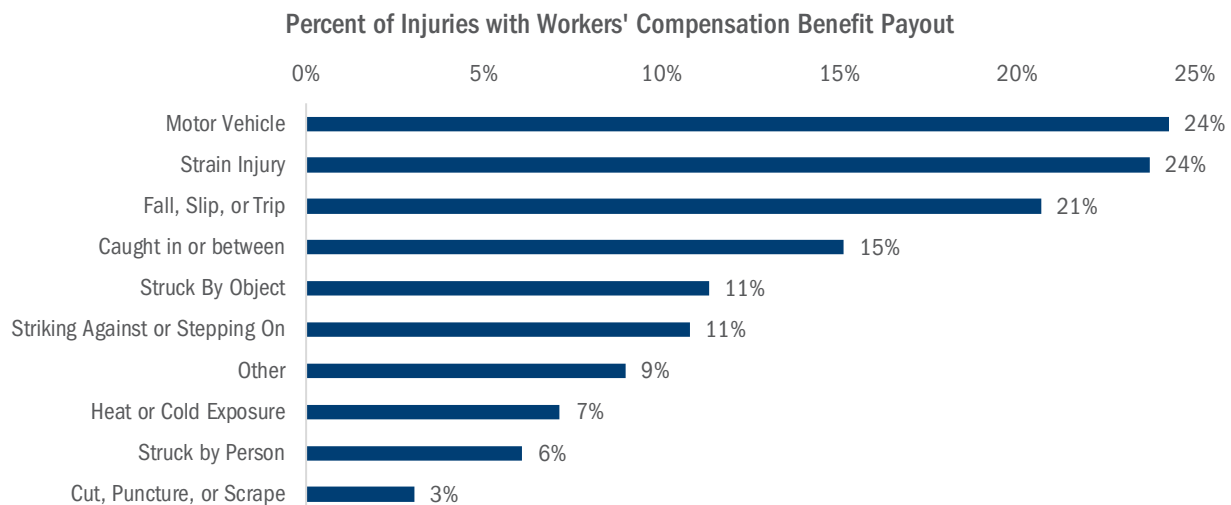
### Detailed Fall Analysis

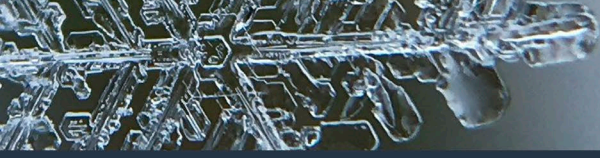
In the past 10 years, Montana workers have reported over 54,000 injuries from falls to DLI, making falls the second most prevalent cause of injury behind muscle strains. Examining the injury report indicates:

- Falls were the leading cause of injury to workers in accommodation/food services and education, and one of the top three causes of injury to workers in all other industries.
- Falls were the leading source of contusions, fractures, concussions, and multi-nature injuries.
- Falls were the leading source of whole-body injury, as well as injuries to the legs and torso.
- Fall injuries were more likely to result in workers needing time away from work to recover, with about 20.7% of falls resulting in workers' compensation benefit payouts compared to 16.3% of all injuries.



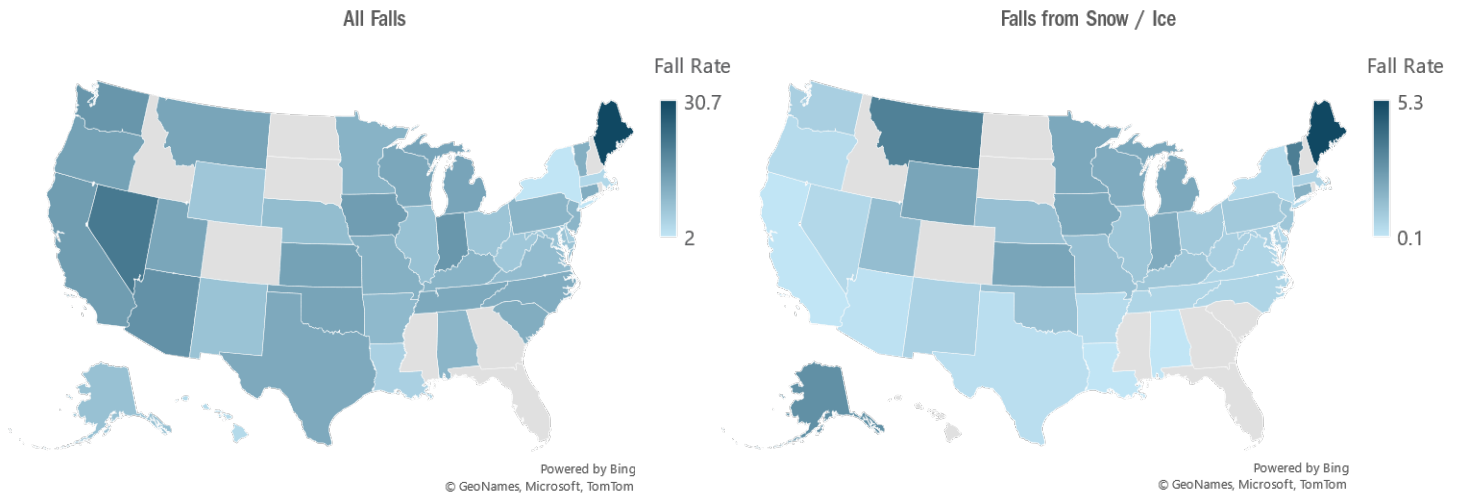
Fall injuries varied more by season than any other type of injury, with rates of injury in the winter rising to more than double the summer rate. Injury codes indicate that the rise of falls caused by snow or ice in the winter is the main cause for this phenomenon.





Data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) indicates Montana workers experience fall injuries at a rate above the national average. In the 2021-2022 biennium, Montana workers experienced 13.6 fall injuries per 10,000 full-time equivalent workers (FTE), slightly above the national average of 11.7 injuries per 10,000 FTE.<sup>2</sup> For fall injuries caused by ice, sleet, or snow, Montana's rate of injury (3.4) was over 4 times greater than the national average (0.8). When examining data directly between states, Montana reported a similar rate of injury to other northern states.

### Comparing Montana to National Trends



### Avoiding Fall Injuries

The good news is that both DLI and BLS data shows falls becoming a less-prevalent cause of injury over time. However, continued vigilance is needed to bring this trend to zero injuries.

#### Avoiding Falls During the Winter

- Physically or chemically remove snow or ice from all workspaces, including outdoor walkways and parking spaces.
- Use traction-enhancing devices (such as Yaktrax) when walking outdoors.
- Reduce step size and walk slower when traversing slick areas.
- Pay special attention when climbing stairs, ladders, or into vehicles.

#### Avoiding Other Falls

- Pay careful attention when walking down hallways or using stairs.
- Remove objects from walkways.
- Use signage to identify wet surfaces.
- Install and use handrails on stairways.
- Wear shoes with proper traction.
- Use proper techniques for climbing all ladders (including stools or stepladders)
- Use proper harnesses when working in an elevated position (such as on a roof).

See the links below for more information on staying safe and avoiding fall injuries:

- [Winter Weather Safety from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#)
- [Making Fall Safety a Top Priority from the National Safety Council \(NSC\)](#)
- [Workplace Safety Topic on Slips, Trips, and Falls from Montana State Fund \(MSF\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> From the Montana Department of Labor & Industry's Workers Compensation Administrative Network. Note that the "winter months" count includes all injuries occurring in the months of December, January, and February.

<sup>2</sup> From the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Injuries, Illnesses, and Fatalities Data, <https://www.bls.gov/iif/>