INJURIES DUE TO SLIPS, TRIPS OR FALLS AMONG FIREFIGHTERS HAVE CONSISTENTLY RANKED AS THE FIRST OR SECOND MOST COMMON CAUSE OF FIREGROUND INJURY.

EVEN MINOR FALLS IN PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) AND SELF CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS (SCBA) CAN LEAD TO INJURY. FATIGUE, LONG SHIFT HOURS, AND HAZARDOUS ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS OF FIREGROUND CAN CONTRIBUTE TO MORE COMPROMISING BEHAVIOR, THUS PLACING YOU AT AN ADDITIONAL RISK.

Practice some balancing activities while wearing your PPE can help correlate improvement of your core body strength along with impaired balance due to the additional risk of falling because of PPE and SCBA.

Additional resources can be found at:
- National Volunteer Fire Council
  www.nvfc.org/resources/healthsafety/
Each year of 2003 through 2006:
- Approximately 50% of all injuries occurred during activities related to fire suppression.
- Slips/trips/falls accounted for 22% or approximately 8,715 injuries. Of these, only 3 to 5% were caused by icy, uneven, or slippery surfaces.
- Slips and falls account for 19 to 27% of all firefighting injuries.

**44% OF ALL UNITED STATES FIREFIGHTERS HAVE SUFFERED FROMSprains AND STRAINS WHILE ON DUTY.**

**Injury Prevention**

1. Define Problem
2. Identify Risks
3. Ways to Prevent
4. Implement And Evaluate

**Prevention:**
Training exercises that enhance balance abilities and core strength should be added to firefighters’ training protocols. Wearing PPE has detrimental effects on balance and gait. These exercises are important for those new to the fire service, as well as for veteran firefighters.

**Examples of Beginner Core Stability Exercises:**

- **Single Leg Stance**—Balance on one leg and slowly swing the other leg back and forth. Start by keeping on hand on a chair and progress from there. Try performing this activity with your eyes closed for an additional challenge.
- **Superman**—Lie on your stomach and lift opposite arm and leg simultaneously. Continue to breath and tighten your lower back muscles as you lift your legs and arms, alternating sides each time.
- **Prone Bridge**—Balance on tips of your toes and elbows while maintaining a flat back. This can also be done on your side, still balancing with your elbow and foot and maintaining a straight back. Do NOT hold your breath.

*Consult your physician prior to making any significant changes to your physical activity level.*