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## Protect Yourself: Climbing In & Out of Your Vehicle

With all of the risk associated with our industry, it is easy to forget that even the mundane, everyday activities can be dangerous, too. Injuries from falling while getting into or out of equipment occur often and is one of the most frequently reported sources of injury in our industry. Some falls are due to operator error – or complacency in new or different settings. Often, they are a result of poor vehicle maintenance or equipment failure. Regardless of where the fault may lie, the best way to prevent falls is to always be prepared.

As a driver, you should be prepared to work with that which you have and do what you can to avoid falls while getting in and out of your vehicle. Minimizing or eliminating operator error is the first step.

- **The “Three-Point Method”.** Before mounting and dismounting equipment, make sure that you have three of your four appendages contacting either a secure part of the vehicle and/or the ground. One hand and both feet; both hands and one foot. Either way, the three-point method should always be practiced.
- **Conditional Awareness.** Be mindful of things that may be different *this time* while getting into or out of your vehicle. Moisture, dirt/mud, ice – these can easily contribute to a slip and fall if gone unnoticed. Also be aware of hazards on and around the surface on which you will be placing your feet.

Perhaps the larger danger, however, is vehicle condition and design deficiencies. Maintenance on items like driver handrails, steps and tread surfaces may not be necessary to *operate* your vehicle safely, but if left unattended, these deficiencies increase your chances of slips, falls and injury.

- **Protect Yourself.** During your daily inspection, assess the condition of components used regularly for support and report any defects needing repair. If repairs cannot be made immediately, be mindful of deficient areas until the repair can be made.