

## Uneven Sidewalks

Thursday, January 23, 2020 9:17:41 AM

Importance: High

### The Experts Robson Forensic

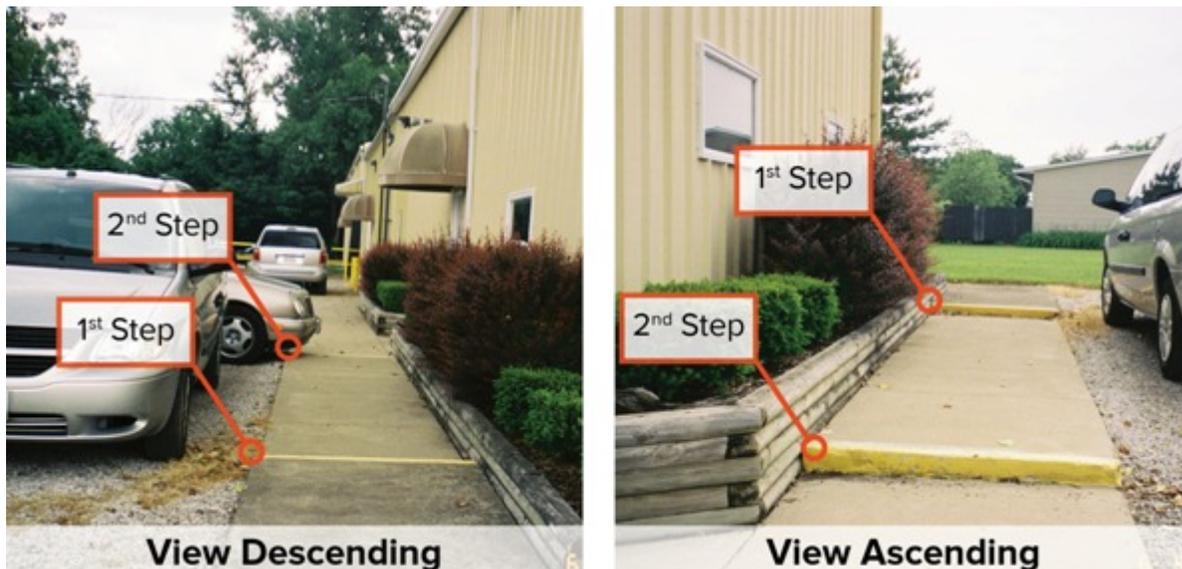
Harvey Cohen and Jake Pauls, in their expert article "Warnings and Markings for Stairways and Pedestrian Terrain," have identified that trips are caused by unexpected impediments in a level walking surface and unexpected change in level, and describes:

"Trips and resultant stumbles most often occur during the swing phase of the stride, when the forward motion of the foot is halted unexpectedly. This can be a brief impediment that usually causes a slight, recoverable stumble (where the foot quickly manages to come free), or a longer impediment, where the toe or heel actually becomes caught and a more serious fall results. In both cases, the fall and stumble are almost always forward in motion, and can result in injuries to the hands, elbows, shoulders, head, or knees."<sup>1</sup>

It goes on to say that if impediments were marked or expected, the pedestrian likely would perceive the existence of the impediment and take appropriate action to either avoid or safely traverse the condition.

Since pedestrians will assume that walkways do not have hazards, property owners must either eliminate hazards, guard hazards from being encountered by unsuspecting pedestrians, or apply visual cues or other such warnings that make hazards reasonably conspicuous so that their existence may be identified before they are encountered in a manner to cause harm.

### Conspicuity of Walkway Hazards



An abrupt change in walkway elevation's ability to be readily identified as a hazard may be improved by applying adequate warnings such as delineated nosing edges, tactile cues, warning signs, or contrast in surface colors. Such warnings may assist pedestrians to identify a dangerous condition that could cause a fall and injury; however, such cues or warnings are not a substitute nor do they negate the need for safe design or construction.

Paint yellow (for concrete and weather guard) around the edges of the concrete. OSHA recommends yellow which means caution, alerts people to potential risks, and is used for hazards related to striking, falling, slipping, and tripping.

If you have uneven sidewalks, consider your options and do what you can to warn pedestrians.