



Don't fall for it

Hamilton Health Sciences' trauma team and Hamilton Paramedic Service are taking the first day of fall (September 22) as an opportunity to remind everyone to be cautious out on [hiking trails](#) and up on roofs and ladders.

There are a lot of seasonal risks that people don't consider, says Dr. Tim Rice, a trauma surgeon at Hamilton Health Sciences.

These incidents are almost always preventable.

Falls from a height continue to be a leading cause of emergency calls and hospital visits. The trauma team sees about 100 patients a year for non-work related falls that have caused severe injury. This number does not include the many calls Hamilton paramedics respond to that require first aid

and/or treatment in the emergency department.

These incidents are almost always preventable, says Dr. Tim Rice. And they result in very serious injuries. We want to make sure people get the message that a fall can be life changing, even from 10-20 feet. We see patients with brain injuries, severely broken bones and major internal injuries.

In 2016, Hamilton Paramedic Services responded to 323 falls from heights, 220 of which took place at peoples homes.

When we respond to these calls, we often find that the person has put themselves in a risky position by making poor choices, says Russell Crocker, deputy chief of Hamilton Paramedic Service. We see people wearing inappropriate footwear, going off-trail on a hike or failing to secure a ladder before climbing it. We don't want people to stop hiking or doing fall cleanup, we just want them to be smart about it.

The team's message is clear: Don't fall for it. Taking a risk to capture a selfie or get a chore done more quickly just isn't worth your life.