

# Case Studies from Express



## Safety

Learning from other companies' mistakes can help keep you and your employees safe. These case studies provide examples of mistakes that companies have made regarding safety issues. By knowing these pitfalls and following the safety tips provided by Express, you can be assured that your company is a safer place to work. Contact Express Personnel Services for more information on this and other HR issues.

## Inclement Weather

An employer had planned an off-site employee luncheon to provide an update on the company's performance. Snow and ice moved into the area the morning of the scheduled meeting. The employer decided to move forward with the meeting, and three employees slipped and fell due to the hazardous weather conditions on the way to the meeting, resulting in workers' compensation claims.

### **What could this employer do to eliminate or reduce accidents in the future?**

- Cancel off-site meetings when hazardous travel conditions exist. Employees should be encouraged to perform/attend only necessary functions/meetings.
- Hold meetings on-site to avoid travel.
- Keep an emergency supply of material to clear sidewalks during inclement weather.

## Wet Work Areas

A facility has a paint process where materials must be cleaned to prepare the surface for paint. This cleaning line uses chemicals mixed with water to clean the parts. Water often drips off the parts, overflows from tanks or leaks from piping. An employee slipped on the water and sprained his wrist, leading to a workers' compensation claim.

### **What could this employer do to eliminate or reduce accidents in the future?**

- Install drains in the floor to collect spills. This will automatically help drain overflows, spills, or inadvertent dripping.
- Ensure adequate tools/equipment are readily available in areas where hazards are present.
- Utilize mats or slip resistant flooring to assist until spills can be adequately cleaned.
- Require all employees in the area to wear slip-resistant shoes.
- Train employees to clean the area periodically so that spills are not allowed to remain after they are detected.
- Perform job hazard analyses to determine if job functions can/need to be changed.

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### Clutter in Work Area

ABC company has received a large order of office chairs and has begun receiving raw material to begin production. Most of the raw material is utilized in one subassembly area. This subassembly area is not designed for a large volume of materials.

#### **How can this employer eliminate or reduce the potential for slips, trips and falls?**

1. First of all, it is critical that all entrance and exits routes are clear. If clutter or work in progress is allowed to accumulate, adequate progress can be hampered or blocked all together.
2. Consider redesigning layout if product demand is foreseeable.
3. General housekeeping can sometimes be adequate to limit clutter. Many materials are received with as much packaging as raw material. If packaging is managed appropriately, hazards can be abated.
4. Staging or batch assembly (work process) can reduce raw material accumulation for areas which are not designed for such workload.
5. Performing job hazard analyses to determine if job functions can/need to be changed.

### Climbing

An employee works in a small warehouse with high stack shelving. There is only one “cherry-picker” in the fork truck fleet. A production line needs five bulbs to finish out their run of product. Bulbs are located on the third rack in the warehouse. The warehouse supervisor receives the call for the parts but indicates that the cherry-picker is currently busy. The line supervisor walks to the warehouse and climbs up to the third rack to retrieve the five bulbs.

#### **What could this employer do to eliminate or reduce the exposure for slips, trips and falls?**

1. It is never acceptable to climb on racks to retrieve parts. This exposes an employee to a 10-15 foot fall which could lead to serious injury or fatality.
2. This is the perfect opportunity to provide leadership and prove that people are more important than production. The supervisor could wait until the cherry-picker is available and not be a bad example by climbing on the racks.
3. Place the most frequently pulled items on lower shelves.
4. If demand is stable, consider purchasing additional equipment. One serious claim could easily justify the cost of additional equipment.