

Walking – Working Surface Hazards

Slips, trips and falls account for many workplace accidents and result in more than 10 percent of all accidental **deaths**. Slip, trip, falls also produce a significant amount of muscle strains which produce costly long-term claims. This is why it is important that we pay close attention to the areas where we walk and work to reduce the hazards that can cause slips, trips or falls.

On the job, there can be many different types of slip, trip and fall hazards. For instance, debris on the floor is just as hazardous as cords or hoses lying in walking areas. There are many different types of hazards lurking around in our work areas that can easily present a slip/trip/fall injury, and it is important that management take the steps necessary to control the hazards before they produce costly injuries.

What should managers be on the lookout for when walking through their shops? Listed below is a brief list of the most common types of slip/trip/fall hazards seen in a dealership:

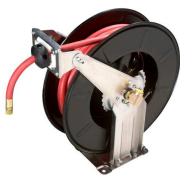
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cords lying in aisles or other walking areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material stored on stairs.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Water, grease or lubricants on the floor creating a slip hazard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor lighting in walking or working areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items (pallets, boxes, supplies, tools, etc.) stored in a walking area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uneven or damaged walking surfaces

Cords and Hoses

A common trip hazard in all dealerships is cords and hoses. Cords and hoses should not be left on floors or lying in walking areas.

What hoses and cords are the most problematic?

Air Hoses- Air hoses are a common problem in dealerships. Since hoses are used by technicians throughout the day, they are often left on the floor. As a result of leaving the hoses on the floor, they become a significant threat for trip/fall injuries. Appropriate solutions to control this hazard are as follows: retractable hose reels, and a new product “coiled air lines”.



A less effective solution is to keep the hoses on hangers (either attached to the lift post, or on a side wall). This option is not as effective because the hoses do not usually get returned to their hangers. Take a look in your shop. Do you see hoses lying around?

Extension cords- Extension cords can only be used on a temporary basis; ‘*temporary*’ means using the cord when you need additional power for a short period of time, such as when operating a power tool. They cannot be used as a substitute for permanent wiring. Extension cords that are wrapped around poles, taped down to the floor or look like they have been in the same place for years are not likely being used on a temporary basis, but rather, they are being used as a substitute for permanent wiring. Extension cords create trip and electrical hazards. Look in your work area and see where extension cords are in use and take action to eliminate as many as possible.

Floor Surface Conditions

Is your service department floor clean? Think again- many dealerships think that standard mopping of service floors will keep the floors clean. Actually, that's far from the truth. These days, many dealerships have painted, non-slip floor surfaces in their service departments. These floor types require different types of floor cleaning. The traditional mopping just won't do the trick.

These newer floor surfaces are designed to give technicians better traction through its raised paint, grit or grooved floor etching. Traditional mopping just moves soiled solution around the floor, allowing the soiled solution to settle in the floor grooves that are designed to improve traction. Instead, you end up with floor build-up and slick floors. To improve floor surface conditions, it is suggested that dealerships invest in a floor scrubbing machine. These walk-behind floor scrubbers are designed to apply fresh cleaning solution to the floors, scrub them and vacuum up the soiled solution, rather than allowing the soiled solution to dry on the floor. Always follow your floor manufacturer's instructions for appropriate cleaning solutions, and use of a floor scrubber should effectively maintain floor cleanliness and traction.

Material Storage in Working Areas

Take a hard look at your dealership. Are the different departments well organized? Or are the workstations tight and cluttered with boxes or miscellaneous parts, etc? When was the last time your dealership had a good "old fashioned" spring cleaning? It's not surprising to see storage of old parts and equipment build-up over time, and years later you notice that the shop is in shambles from "too much stuff". It's often a problem in parts departments as well. Storage of old parts, or warranty items that "never go away", seem to build up on part's department shelves, until you are in overflow mode, which causes storage in aisles and stairways. These types of storage situations can easily produce an unnecessary trip/falls. Sometime soon, take a walk-through of your departments - arrange a "spring cleaning"!

Keeping Your Area Free From Hazards

Some of the biggest slip, trip, and fall problems found in dealerships are poor housekeeping issues. As you look at your work area, keep these issues in mind:

- Make sure floors are swept so that dust and debris do not accumulate and create a trip or slip hazard
- Keep floors clean and dry – wet floors are a slip hazard. Clean up spilled materials immediately. Set out caution signs to warn of wet floor conditions
- Don't let trash overflow in work areas
- Remove excess clutter from aisles, exits and passageways
- Stairs should never have material stored on them
- Minimize cord use. Avoid running cords down hallways or across aisles. Use retractable hose reels or re-coilable air hoses
- Wear non-slip footwear to prevent falls on slippery surfaces



Walking and working surfaces can cause many different injuries. The more we pay attention to the hazards in our work area, the better chance we have of controlling workplace injuries and lost production time.

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