



## Common causes of slip-and-fall accidents - 1

- **Problem:** Debris on the floor.
- **Solution:** Regular clean-up, preferably before the end of the day/shift.

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**SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS**

Picking up trash and other debris can be easy to neglect, especially in workplaces like construction sites that generate lots of debris every day. But it's critically important in preventing slip/trip-and-fall injuries.

The best time to clean up the workplace is near, but not at, the end of a shift or work day. That's because people aren't as alert as they're leaving work as they are a little earlier.

Although piles of discarded items are dangerous – they can cause trip-and-fall accidents, of which more later – sometimes single items are more of a risk for a slip-and-fall. A stray sheet of packing material, or a single object on the floor, can wreak havoc.

Here's an example:

### **REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE**

Mary was a production line worker for General Mills, the cereal company. One day she was packing boxes of children's cereal that had toy cars inserted into them as prizes. Unbeknownst to Mary, one of her co-workers had dropped one of the toys on the floor, and as Mary walked down the line, she stepped on it.

The wheeled toy skidded, and Mary along with it. She went down in a heap, injuring her back. Her back pain lasted for months, and she missed a number of days of work.

*(ask the participants)*

### **What did Mary and her co-workers do wrong?**

**Correct answer:** Mary was aware of the special danger of these toy cars – another employee had fallen on one a few weeks earlier. Because they were small, they easily slipped out of people's hands and dropped to the floor. But neither Mary nor her workmates took any precautions to periodically check the floor under and around the production line for these mini-traps.

*(Helton v. General Mills, Iowa Workers' Compensation Commissioner)*