



Keeping Customers Safe

LESSON OBJECTIVE: Remind employees to be aware of common hazards on the salesfloor and to be vigilant about fixing them so customers stay safe.

ESTIMATED COMPLETION TIME: 3 to 5 minutes to complete the worksheet. For a longer lesson, use the "For Further Discussion" section.

HOW TO USE: The lesson includes a worksheet to get employees thinking about customer safety in the store. The trainer's notes will help guide the discussion. The answers listed for the worksheet are some common answers, but be sure to include your own insights or other answers from students.

OPENING COMMENTS: Customer safety is something we should be aware of every day as we are on the job. We want our store to be a safe place for customers to shop. When we see a potential hazard, we need to fix it right away. Because of the variety of products we have, a home improvement store like ours has a few different areas where we might find potential hazards.

WORKSHEET INSTRUCTIONS: On this worksheet, we'll identify a few of the common hazards. On your worksheet, you'll find listed several areas of our store. For each of the areas listed, what are some potential hazards you might find? What should you do when you see a hazard?

AREA: PAINT DEPARTMENT

Potential hazard:

- Chemical spills. Paint has a lot of hazardous chemicals. If one of these chemicals spills, it can pose a slipping hazard. Some hazardous chemicals may be harmful if they get on a customer's skin or if they are inhaled. If you see a spill, block off the affected aisle and notify a manager. Finish cleaning up the aisle before letting customers back through the aisle.

AREA: LAWN AND GARDEN DEPARTMENT

Potential hazard:

- Chemicals spills. This department also has some hazardous chemicals, such as insecticides. They also pose a slipping hazard and may be harmful if they come into contact with a customer.
- Lifting. This area also has heavy items, such as bagged goods. Ask customers if you can help them carry items to the checkout or load into their vehicle.

AREA: ELECTRICAL DEPARTMENT

Potential hazard:

- Tripping over loose cords. This department may have spools of bulk wire that may get disorganized and spill into the aisle, causing a tripping hazard. You can help prevent this hazard by keeping bulk items organized and product out of the aisle.

AREA: PLUMBING DEPARTMENT

Potential hazard:

- Tripping over loose merchandise. This department may have bulk displays of pipe that might easily get disorganized and slip into the aisle, causing a tripping hazard. To fix it, keep bulk items organized and product out of the aisle.

AREA: TOOLS DEPARTMENT

Potential hazard:

- Sharp items protruding from the aisle. Some tools with sharp edges might get disorganized on the shelf and the edges may protrude into the aisle, causing a hazard to customers. Organize the merchandise so it's stacked neatly on the shelf.



AREA: STORE ENTRANCE

Potential hazards:

- Product blocking the door. Entrance and exits of the store need to be clearly marked and free from obstruction. Everyone in the store needs full access to the door in case of emergency. Always clear objects that may be blocking a door and never set items down in that area.
- Loose handrail. If there are ramps or stairs near the entrance, there should be a handrail. If the handrail is loose, it may not provide a sturdy support for customers who need it.

AREA: THROUGHOUT THE STORE

Potential hazards:

- Low light. Look for burned out light bulbs and dark corners of the store. Dark areas can hide hazards. A customer might walk into a hazardous situation without realizing it.
- Wet floors. Many factors can contribute to a wet floor—rainy days, spills, mopping. Wet floors cause a slipping hazard. Always identify wet floors with hazard signs.
- Loose signage. Endcap or overhead signage that is not properly secured can fall. If a sign appears loose, fix it or report it to a manager immediately.

CLOSING COMMENTS:

This is not a comprehensive list; you should always use common sense when looking around the store. If you see something that looks like a hazard, fix it or report it. Remember, customer safety is a top priority.

FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

- What are some other areas or potential hazards you've identified in our store? How did you fix them?
- If your store has a lumberyard, discuss potential hazards to customers picking lumber.
- When a customer does have an accident, what do we do? Review the store's emergency response plan.