

What's your story and how do you prevent it?

Trucking: Charles Spears

Charles worked as a trucker for Williams Tank Lines. On May 12, 2004, a truck carrying a full load pulled out of the refinery. His right leg was sucked under the back of the trailer, running over his heel, crushing the bones like potato chips. That night, they amputated his leg 6 inches below the knee. Due to his injury, Charles can no longer do the things he used to do.

Airlines: Wayne Shuster

Wayne worked for Delta Airlines for 6 years at LAX airport as a ramp agent. He off-loaded freight and baggage from the planes and drove tugs that pull baggage carts to the baggage area. On March 22, 2003, he lost a box from my cart as he entered the baggage area. He parked his tug on the ramp and went to pick up the box. The tug's brakes failed, and the tug and cart rolled back down the ramp, breaking his leg in 2 places. He now has a steel rod from his knee to his ankle, with screws as well.

We often become complacent in the workplace, or maybe we do not have the proper tools and equipment to do our job. Injuries impact us at work, as well as our families at home. Share your stories and let's learn from each other.



Telling Stories

Most workplace accidents are easily preventable. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has extensive regulations that employers are required to follow to help prevent accidents and ensure employee safety. Furthermore, employers often have their own safety policies and procedures designed to provide employees with a safe work environment.

Construction Accident: Thomas Patane

One early morning in May of 2014 26-year-old Thomas Patane was part of a construction crew working on PS 313, a new elementary school being constructed in Queens, New York. A 911 call was made to the police reporting that someone had fallen down an elevator shaft.

For reasons that are unclear, Patane (who was working on the fifth floor) fell down the elevator shaft to the basement. He was rushed to Elmhurst Hospital Center, where he was pronounced dead. Though the accident is still being investigated, Patane was reportedly wearing a safety harness that was not attached to a lifeline as required by OSHA.

On the same day, at the same construction site, a second construction worker fell down the elevator shaft. This worker fell more than six feet from the second floor to the first floor. He was wearing a safety harness that was attached to a lifeline. This worker survived the fall with non-life-threatening injuries.

Fall protection measures (such as a personal fall arrest systems) are meant to prevent accidents such as Patane's. Workers wearing safety vests that are attached to lifelines prevent workers who fall from dropping more than six feet.



Workplace Accident: Randy J. Austin

Man lying on warehouse floor by hard hat, a victim of one of many workplaces injury stories
In July of 2009, Randy Austin, an employee of Kroger, was told to clean a slick spill in the restroom of one of the stores. Kroger had a policy that required employees to use a product called "Spill Magic" to clean spills. The use of Spill Magic reduces slip and fall accidents by 25%.

On the day that Austin had to clean the spills in the bathroom, the Spill Magic stations were not stocked. Instead of using Spill Magic, Austin used a dry mop and bucket to clean the spills. Despite being particularly careful, during the cleaning process Austin fell and suffered serious injuries to his femur and hip.

Kroger's Safety Handbook required that management make sure that Spill Magic was always available at several places throughout the store. On the day of Austin's accident, no Spill Magic was available. While there is no guarantee that if Spill Magic had been available, he would not have fallen and suffered a serious injury, there is a chance that its use would have prevented the accident.

