



Water from Freezer Ice Causes Slip and Fall

What Happened?



A student sustained contusions to both knees and his left hand when he slipped on water that had accumulated on the floor because of ice falling from a freezer. An anti-slip mat had been placed in front of the freezer; however, the water had spread further into the walkway area. Prior to the accident, another researcher had attempted to clean up the spill and left paper towels on the floor. The student entered the area to place samples back into the freezer. When he turned around and stepped off the anti-slip mat, he slipped and fell. The student did not report the injury immediately to his supervisor nor seek medical attention until the next day. At the time of the accident, the researcher was wearing open-toed shoes.

What Was The Cause?

The incident was caused by poor housekeeping resulting in water accumulating on the floor. Improper footwear may have contributed to the slipping.

What Corrective Actions Were Taken?

- Discuss and review proper housekeeping procedures with all lab members
- Review injury reporting policy; all injuries should be reported to the supervisor as soon as possible
- Review PPE in the laboratory area for all lab members

How Can Incidents Like This Be Prevented?

- Defrost freezers once a year or when ice accumulates; it not only prevents ice from falling out but also extends the freezer's life
- Have caution signs available in the freezer area that can be placed if you cannot clean up the wet area immediately
- Place anti-slip mats in areas that are prone to water spills
- Wear closed-toed shoes with slip-resistant soles
- Clean up when you cause or see a water spill; you could save someone's day