

“While shopping in a charity shop, an elderly customer, who used a walking stick, tripped and fell over a toy lorry that was on the sales floor. Earlier in the day, a young child had taken the toy off the display shelf and had been playing with it on the floor. The customer was taken to hospital by ambulance.”

Managing customer traffic flow is important in retail. You need to allow customers space to move around the shop but also to examine the goods on offer. Accidents are not only distressing for customers and volunteers, but could be expensive for the charity if they result in a compensation claim.

Tips

- Take time to make a regular check of the floor to see that it is tidy, not slippery and free from trip hazards (for example worn carpet or lino).
- It's important to plan the stock display so that young children in pushchairs cannot reach items.
- Organise storage to avoid keeping heavy or fragile items on high shelves.
- Use appropriate equipment to reach high shelves, for example a stepladder with supporting handrail or a kick stool.
- Take volunteers' mobility or medical conditions into account when planning tasks.

Useful links

Health and Safety Executive retail pages:

www.hse.gov.uk/retail/index.htm

www.hse.gov.uk/falls/stepladders.htm

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg403.pdf