

“We received a large number of donations on Saturday and our backroom storage area was full. John suggested we store some of the items in the cellar, which was accessed by a hatch in the sales area of the shop. One of the customers did not notice that the hatch was open and fell down the stairs.”

It's important to be aware of hazards associated with storage areas. If you have a storage area in a cellar or loft, then make sure that the access stairs have a handrail. Storage areas need to be dry with sufficient ceiling height and good lighting, to help to prevent trip and slip accidents. Carrying donations up or down stairs or moving them in a small storeroom could cause back injuries.

Tips

- Carry out a stocktake and review how you're managing stock flow at the shop. Think about the types of donation you're receiving and their quality and whether you need to store everything that is donated. Refuse donations if you haven't got enough space to store them.
- Make sure you're making the best use of the space available.
- Be aware of the risk of contamination in cellars from vermin and the possibility of infestation in clothing donations.
- Sort incoming donations every day and increase the frequency of waste collections.
- If necessary, see whether you can rent additional storage space locally.
- Take good quality donations that you haven't got room for to other shops in your network.
- Train volunteer staff in manual handling techniques.

Useful links

Health and Safety Executive – slips and trips:

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

Getting to grips with manual handling:

www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/indg143.pdf