



HEALTH, SAFETY,
& ENVIRONMENTAL



Alert #: SA 50-26

Date: August 6, 2026

High-Frequency, Low-Risk Tasks Can Still Cause Injuries

Recently a first aid injury incident occurred during routine housekeeping activity. An employee was rolling up an extension cord that had been routed overhead. While securing the cord, the loose end unexpectedly dropped into the employee's line-of-fire and struck him in the face, causing a minor laceration to his lip. The employee was medically evaluated on location, treated and released to work without restriction.

Key Learning Point:

This incident serves as an important reminder that injuries don't only occur during complex or high-hazard work activities.

As an organization, we generally perform very well during **low-frequency, high-risk tasks** because these jobs receive significant planning, hazard analysis, oversight, and attention. We recognize the risks and put controls in place to manage them effectively.

However, many injuries occur during **high-frequency, low-risk tasks** because routine often leads to complacency. When we perform the same tasks repeatedly, we begin to rely on habit instead of actively recognizing and managing hazards. Activities such as:

- Housekeeping
- Manual material handling
- Walking to and from work areas
- Ascending/descending stairs and ladders

These are performed every day and are often viewed as low-risk activities. Because these tasks are so familiar, it is easy to lower our guard and overlook hazards such as line-of-fire exposures, dropped objects, pinch points, slips, trips and falls, and struck-by hazards. **Complacency can turn a simple task into an injury event.**

How We Can Prevent High-Frequency, Low-Risk Tasks from Becoming Incidents:

Treat Every Task as Important

Do not allow familiarity to replace hazard recognition. Every task deserves the same level of attention and focus.

Pause and Assess

Before beginning routine work, stop and identify potential hazards such as dropped objects, struck-by hazards, line-of-fire exposures, and trip hazards.

Maintain Situational Awareness

Remain focused on the task at hand, the work environment, and avoid rushing to complete tasks.

Use Life-Saving Behaviors

Apply the same discipline, hazard recognition, and personal accountability during routine work that you would during high-risk operations.

Ask Yourself:

1. What routine tasks do I perform daily that could lead to injury if I lose focus?
2. Have I become comfortable enough with certain tasks that I no longer assess the hazards before starting?
3. What controls can I implement to better manage hazards associated with routine tasks?
4. How can I maintain the same level of focus during low-risk tasks that we apply to high-risk work?

Key Takeaway:

The greatest risk is often not the task we fear, but the task we perform every day without thinking about it.

Consistent hazard recognition, maintaining control of tools and materials, staying out of the line of fire, and remaining aware of our surroundings are critical during all activities, regardless of perceived risk. No task is too routine to cause an injury. Every task deserves our full attention. We don't rise to the level of our training; we fall to the level of our habits. Make hazard recognition a habit, even during routine tasks.

Proper use of the **GIS LIFE Processes** can help to create a **FAIL-SAFE** Work Environment

SAFETY ALERT

