



# Loss Control Insight

## Beware of Broken Glass

A woman working at a checkout counter in a supermarket had her busy routine suddenly interrupted when a bottle of soda pop exploded nearby. She was showered with glass but suffered only minor cuts.

A clerk in a department store was showing a customer a lamp display. The customer accidentally bumped into it, and a lamp fell on the clerk and broke, severing an artery in his wrist.

A maintenance worker was hit in the eye by a sliver of glass when a window fell out of its frame.



The list of injuries could go on, ranging from someone walking through a glass door to dropping a glass in the bathroom. But the safety story doesn't end with the injuries. Someone has to clean up the broken glass, and great care is needed in doing it.

In fact, injuries resulting from picking up broken glass or resulting from someone not picking up broken glass may not always make the headlines, but they take their toll all too frequently with scratches, cuts, puncture wounds, severed arteries, and infections. Sooner or later, all of us have to deal with broken glass—maybe only occasionally, or maybe often, depending on the nature of our jobs.

There are several basic precautions that are necessary when handling broken glass. First of all, if you get cut, get first aid immediately.

When disposing of broken glass, use only special receptacles and take them to the spot where the glass is located. Put a label on each container identifying its contents as broken glass.

Broken bottles and glass should never be deposited in waste paper baskets or regular rubbish containers. If you're working with machinery, it should be stopped before broken glass is removed.

Workers who are regularly exposed to broken glass should wear proper protective equipment. This includes safety glasses, goggles, or masks, depending on the kind of work. Gloves or sleevelets and heavy-soled work shoes are also necessary.

Occasionally, we all break a drinking glass or similar object. In this case, the broken glass may be collected using a piece of cardboard or heavy paper. The smaller particles can be picked up with several thicknesses of wet paper towels, wrapped, and marked as broken glass. Never use cloth towels or napkins to collect glass particles.

Likewise, ordinary cloth mops should not be used to clean up broken glass. Instead, sponge mops, brushes, or brooms should be set aside for glass use exclusively. A shovel and rubber squeegee is also a safe way to handle the situation.

Persons working with machinery and conveyors, where broken glass is a common problem, should use the special tools that are often provided for glass removal in these situations.

At this point, I'd like to emphasize that persons working with glassware have to be constantly alert for breakage, poor stacking, and faulty cartons. A serious injury can result if you reach into a box or shelf where broken glass is partially concealed.

Sometime, you might have to handle or try to open glass containers that might break. In this case, cover both your hands with heavy towels for protection.

Should there be reason to suspect that broken glass is concealed under soapy water in a sink or submerged in some other manner, the water should not be used but should be drained before you attempt to remove the glass particles.

It would be virtually impossible to cover all the instances in which you might be confronted with a broken glass problem. But it should be remembered that broken glass must be disposed of promptly and in a manner that is safe for yourself and others.

If special facilities for removal aren't available, a broom and dustpan, cardboard, or heavy gloves can be used.