



## Patented Floor Monitoring System Reduces Slip/Fall Claims

After instituting a new floor monitoring process using an electronic tracking system, a high-volume Giant Eagle store in central Pennsylvania reduced the number of slip/fall claims by 87 percent, resulting in a safer, more profitable store.

The Altoona, Pa., Giant Eagle store was among the first to adopt GleasonESP™, an electronic slip/fall prevention system offered by Gleason Technology, Inc. (a former division of the Gleason Group). The GleasonESP system requires regular floor inspections by employees using a handheld monitoring device that logs floor conditions at the time of inspection. Data is downloaded to a central computer at Gleason Technology, providing a permanent record for the store.



**Bill McKillop, owner of the Altoona Giant Eagle,** understands the importance of monitoring slip/fall hazards. “With our insurance costs rising, I knew we needed to find a better way to manage our risk. Gleason offered a solution that helped reduce risk and lower premiums at the same time.”

Prior to the installation of the GleasonESP system in mid-1998, the 60,000-square-foot store reported an average of eight slip/fall general liability claims per year, impacting the store’s bottom line between \$27,000-\$40,000 annually. After changing to the electronic slip/fall system, the Altoona store had only one claim the following year, and the low rate of claims continues to this day. “With our insurance costs rising, I knew we needed to find a better way to manage our risk,” said Bill McKillop, store owner. “Gleason offered a solution that helped reduce risk and lower premiums at the same time.”

### How GleasonESP Works

The GleasonESP system is comprised of one or more hand-held data retrievers designed to collect and store information; a hazard identifier card attached to the retriever; and a transmitter that electronically sends information to Gleason’s risk management department.

Gleason professionals carefully analyzed the store’s layout to determine the most efficient monitoring route to be used by the store’s employees. Identification (ID) markers were strategically placed in the store, with special consideration given to high-risk areas, such as the produce department. Additionally, a store associate marker station with electronic ID buttons for each employee assigned to conduct a safety inspection was hung at the manager’s office.

To start a typical tour, an employee picks up the data retriever and hazard identifier card, and activates the retriever by touching his/her name ID button. The employee walks the pre-determined store route, inspecting each area and touching the ID markers with the data retriever to record the condition of the aisles. If a slip/fall condition is found, the employee records it electronically, calls for a clean up and remains at the site until the hazard has been removed. The clean up is then recorded and the monitoring continues.

### An Improved Bottom Line

McKillop said he is extending his utilization of GleasonESP as a catalyst to promote a storewide cultural change to provide the safest possible store through the monitoring and documentation of floor conditions. The system has allowed McKillop to build team awareness for slip/fall control as well as overall store appearance.

After installation and in-store training, the Gleason professionals developed a standardized procedure to maximize the number of walks per day by the staff at Altoona Giant Eagle. The store's front-end manager prepares a walk schedule for the day, ensuring that no employee conducts more than two walks per day. Ten minutes before the top of each hour, announcements are made over the public address system that it is time for a safety check. The announcements also identify the name of each employee scheduled to conduct the hourly walk.

McKillop encourages his employees to use the GleasonESP store walks to maintain store appearance, interact with customers and perform a variety of valuable merchandising activities, such as checking inventory and keeping promotional displays and end-caps neatly stocked. Programmed messages are also announced over the public address system in the Altoona store encouraging customers to notify store associates of any floor hazards. "This procedure has helped build awareness of slip/fall prevention across the entire operation," McKillop said. "For example, the deli manager normally would have never walked the entire store unless shopping on personal time. Now, department managers and associates are given an opportunity to get out of their own department and view the entire operation in a new light."

Due to the success of the Gleason ESP system at his Altoona store, McKillop has since installed the product at his Ebensburg site. According to McKillop, the benefits of the ESP system have more than offset the cost of installation. Not only does it make the store cleaner and safer, but use of the system has reduced both liability and insurance costs.