



July 23 — Temporary Fixes Can Create Permanent Problems

A railcar brake shoe (or similar heavy steel component) was found being used as a door stop to hold open the east rail bay doors in the Elevator Department. The object was not designed for this purpose and was left in a pedestrian travel path. Improper use of a heavy steel object as a door stop creates a trip hazard and potential foot injury if moved or kicked. The object could also become a struck-by hazard if displaced by door movement, equipment traffic, or high winds.

Recommended installation of an approved door stop or door hold-open device if required for normal operations.

Just because something works...

...doesn't mean it's the safest solution.

During a walk-through of the Elevator Department, employees found a railcar brake shoe being used to hold open a bay door. While it may have seemed like a convenient solution, the heavy steel object wasn't designed for that purpose and had become another hazard in the work area.

Placed in a pedestrian travel path, the brake shoe created a trip hazard and could have caused a serious foot injury if kicked or dropped. If the door moved unexpectedly due to equipment traffic or strong winds, the heavy steel object could also become a struck-by hazard.

Temporary fixes often seem harmless because they solve an immediate problem. However, over time those quick solutions can become "the way we've always done it," causing us to overlook the new hazards they've introduced.

Before using a tool, piece of equipment, or material for something it wasn't designed to do, ask yourself whether there's a safer, more appropriate solution.

Hazards

- Trip hazards
- Foot and ankle injuries
- Struck by hazards
- Improper use of equipment
- Housekeeping and Pedestrian Hazards
- Normalization of temporary fixes

Words of Wisdom

Temporary solutions have a way of becoming permanent habits. Use the right equipment for the right purpose, and don't let convenience create a new hazard.

Pause and Think

- Have you ever seen an object being used for something it wasn't designed to do?
- What hazards can temporary fixes create over time?
- Why do these types of shortcuts become "normal" in the workplace?
- What is the proper way to address a recurring problem instead of creating a workaround?
- What temporary fixes around your work area should be replaced with a permanent solution?

Closing Thought

The easiest solution isn't always the safest one. Before creating a quick fix, ask yourself whether you're solving one problem—or creating another.