

The Problem of Space

The challenges faced by the Repair Tech

Lovleen Kaur Sasan

HRM 3400

Fall 2022

Keywords: limited space, injury, hazardous conditions

Background information about the organization:

Repair Tech is a subsidiary of Price Bay Electronics Co., located in Canada, the United States, and Mexico. It is a team of technicians that provides technological support for all electronic devices sold by the company. They provide in-store and in-home services for all kinds of products. Some of the services offered by Repair Tech are device setup, in-home device installation, on-call technical support, appliance service, diagnosis of technical problems, repairs, etc. They also offer an extended warranty of up to 5 years on all products for an additional fee, saving customers stress and time when dealing with the manufacturer. With thousands of employees working under the company, each employee has a special role and is trained to provide a specific type of service.

Repair Tech has only 2 distribution centers across Canada: one is in Brampton, ON, and the other is in Vancouver, BC. The employees at these centers are mostly product testers and technicians who must deal with all the returns coming to all stores in the country. Hence, these warehouses have all sorts of products sold by Price Bay that are returned by a customer. These are then tested and repaired to be sold again as open-box units.

Description of the incident:

Rajesh Kumar is one of the product testers at the Repair Tech distribution center. She is a 30-year-old female who has been working for the company for the past 4 years. Since the day she joined the company, she has been working in the computing department, where her job duties include testing and diagnosing the laptops for any possible technical problems and troubleshooting all the devices. She has a target of testing approximately 40 units per day.

To begin with her duty every morning, Rajesh goes to one end of the warehouse with her cart to collect some laptops for testing. There is one fixed corner of the warehouse that is assigned for smartwatches, laptops, tablets, smartphones, desktops, and headphones. When they are received by the warehouse, the products are then sorted and labeled as per their respective categories and assembled on separate skids. Before anyone touches the skids, they are properly arranged, with each type of product on a separate skid. But once people start collecting the units, they mix everything up. Sometimes, they would not leave enough space for the testers to grab the products

toward the wall, and sometimes they would make a big pile of laptops, which is always at risk of falling. One day while doing so, a huge pile of laptops fell on her due to which her ankle got hurt. It did not badly hurt, as she was wearing steel-toed shoes, but it could have been worse. So, she expressed her concern to the HR. Then, the management told everyone strictly not to mix up all the products and not to pile up a lot of products just to find whatever they were looking for. The employees understood and started organizing everything for a few days, but after some days, the same previous trend started happening again. Whenever someone would complain, the employees would remain careful, and after a while everything went back to normal. The management is in a very tough position here as the employees complain of less space, due to which the products get scattered, but to increase the space they would have to expand their warehouse as they have already made as much space available as possible. And expanding a warehouse has its own limitations and challenges, which are not that easy.

Organizational Challenges:

The main OHS-related challenge that the organization faces is the threat of injuries. It is a serious problem that might put the organization in danger if the accident happens to employees while they are working. The main problem is that the space is very limited in the warehouse, as if there were more space, the employees could organize the products in a safe way by making small piles on the skids. This problem cannot be resolved until the management changes the layout of the warehouse or gives employees some extra space for the products. However, management is not entirely to blame because they expect employees to be cautious at all times and provide them with the necessary OHS-related trainings. The management's concern is that employees might not take precautions in their absence. The management cannot guide the employees 24/7 on how to do things in a risk-free way; they try their best to provide them with information about health and safety, but they want the employees to understand that it can be a serious threat to them as well as the organization. The organization will be held responsible if the employees are injured due to their own carelessness. However, the employees' main concern is their safety, as it should be because most of the employees working in the warehouse are young adults. One mistake can become a regret for a lifetime, as we all have heard about the incidents where employees injured themselves at work and had to sit at home for the rest of their lives due to disabilities.

Discussion Questions

1. Who do you think is more responsible for this problem? Employees or the Management?
2. According to you, what practices can be implemented by the management of the Repair Tech to make employees more cautious during work?
3. What do you think employees like Rajesh should do when they spot other employees being unsafe? What actions should be taken by the company towards those employees?
4. If the management expanded the warehouse and offered employees more space to assemble their products, what would be its advantages and limitations in terms of safety?