

Paul Gaston

Construction Safety, Maintenance, and Premises Liability Expert

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Professional Summary

Construction safety and facilities maintenance professional with over 30 years of experience managing commercial, municipal, healthcare, and retail projects. Licensed General Contractor for the City of Chicago with an extensive background in high-security, occupied environments such as O'Hare International Airport. Provides expert witness consulting and testimony in cases involving slip, trip, and fall incidents, unsafe flooring systems, condensation hazards, and negligent maintenance. Skilled in assessing building safety standards, inspection procedures, and compliance with OSHA, ADA, and ASTM slip-resistance requirements.

Areas of Expertise

- Premises Liability and Slip/Trip/Fall Hazard Analysis
- Building and Facility Maintenance Safety
- Floor Traction, Coefficient of Friction, and Moisture Hazards
- ADA and OSHA Compliance
- Construction Quality Control and Inspection Management
- Occupied and Secure Site Renovation
- Tenant Improvements and Public Space Build-Outs
- Carpentry, Finish Work, and Fixture Installation
- Building Envelope, Fire-Rated Systems, and Structural Safety

Professional Experience

Principal Consultant | Gaston Consulting

2022 – Present | Chicago, IL

Senior expert witness and consultant providing professional analysis and testimony in construction, safety, and premises liability cases. Specializes in evaluating maintenance failures, building code violations, and safety hazards in public facilities.

- Conducts site inspections, documentation reviews, and forensic analysis of premises conditions.
- Evaluates causes of slip, trip, and fall incidents related to flooring systems, surface traction, and humidity/condensation.
- Provides expert reports and testimony on construction practices, facility safety standards, and maintenance procedures.
- Advises attorneys and insurers on liability exposure and industry standard-of-care compliance.

General Foreman | Department of Aviation, City of Chicago – O'Hare International Airport

2007 – Present | Chicago, IL

Oversees large-scale renovation, maintenance, and construction projects across terminals, concourses, and public facilities at O'Hare International Airport. Directs a team of over 25 skilled trades professionals responsible for carpentry, flooring, plumbing, electrical, and finish work.

- Manages the maintenance, assembly, and installation of **all furniture and fixtures in public areas**, including bars, food courts, restaurants, waiting areas, and concourses.
- Oversees inspection and maintenance schedules for flooring systems, lighting, and ventilation in public zones.
- Ensures compliance with **ADA accessibility, OSHA safety standards, and Department of Aviation regulations**.
- Supervises moisture control and HVAC balancing to prevent condensation and slick floor hazards.
- Coordinates emergency response and safety measures for public and staff areas.
- Leads cross-functional teams ensuring uninterrupted airport operations during maintenance and renovation.

Foreman / Construction Supervisor | City of Chicago, Department of General Services

2005 – 2007 | Chicago, IL

Supervised renovations and maintenance across City facilities, including public safety buildings and offices. Ensured adherence to safety, accessibility, and construction codes during all projects.

Project Manager / Superintendent | Oakley Construction Contractors

2004 – 2005 | Chicago, IL

Managed commercial and educational facility upgrades including ADA compliance, flooring, and accessibility modifications.

Lead Carpenter / Foreman | Various Firms (1994 – 2004)

Led carpentry, framing, millwork, and finish work for commercial, retail, and residential clients including Shriners Hospital, Marshall Field's, and Jewel-Osco. Oversaw ADA-compliant remodels and retail safety upgrades.

Premises Liability & Slip/Trip/Fall Expertise

- Expert in analyzing flooring materials, slip resistance, and maintenance practices in restaurants, retail, and airport facilities.
- Evaluates humidity and condensation control measures and their impact on walking surface safety.
- Familiar with ASTM F1637 and other standards governing safe walking surfaces and wet area traction.

- Reviews maintenance logs, janitorial practices, and inspection protocols for adherence to duty of care.
 - Provides expert opinions on lighting adequacy, signage, mat placement, and safety warning systems.
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Certifications & Licenses

- Licensed General Contractor, City of Chicago (Active)
 - OSHA 30-Hour Construction & General Industry Safety
 - Fall Protection and Slip/Trip/Fall Hazard Recognition
 - ADA Accessibility and Compliance in Public Facilities
 - Personal Protective Equipment and Jobsite Safety
 - Scaffolds in Construction, Confined Space, and Fire Prevention
 - Union Journeyman Carpenter, Carpenters Local 10 (Since 1989)
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Representative Case Focus

- Slip-and-fall incidents in restaurant and retail environments
 - Condensation and humidity-related flooring hazards
 - Negligent maintenance and inspection practices
 - Facility safety compliance and building code violations
 - Construction defect and workmanship disputes
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Expert Rates and Retainer Information:

My standard professional rate is \$350 per hour for investigation, consultation, file review, and report preparation.

For testimony services, I charge \$2,500 per half day, with an hourly rate of \$350 for any time beyond four hours.

An initial nonrefundable retainer of \$10,500, representing 50% of the projected time, is required. This retainer will be billed at \$300 per hour for all services, including but not limited to phone conferences, deposition review, research, on-site assessments, consultations, preparation for deposition or trial, and report preparation (if requested). When the retainer balance reaches \$1,000, an additional retainer of \$3,500 will be required.