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.

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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.

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- 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.

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)

Representative Case Focus

Premises Liability & Public Safety

- Slip, trip, and fall incidents in airports, transportation hubs, and other high-traffic public facilities
- Falls involving polished concrete, tile, terrazzo, epoxy, and coated flooring systems
- Claims involving inadequate lighting, warning signage, matting systems, or barricades
- Pedestrian incidents in occupied and operational facilities

Moisture, Condensation & Environmental Hazards

- Condensation-related slip hazards caused by HVAC imbalance, humidity migration, or temperature differentials
- Water intrusion, tracked moisture, and wet-floor conditions in restrooms, food service, and entry zones
- Analysis of maintenance and response protocols related to known moisture-producing conditions

Maintenance, Inspection & Standard of Care

- Negligent maintenance, inspection failures, and deferred repair conditions
- Evaluation of janitorial procedures, cleaning products, schedules, and documentation
- Review of owner, tenant, and contractor duty-of-care responsibilities

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Code, ADA & Regulatory Compliance

- ADA accessibility violations affecting walking surfaces, transitions, ramps, and public access routes
- OSHA-related safety failures in occupied or mixed-use environments
- Building code compliance involving flooring, handrails, egress, and fire-rated assemblies

Construction & Workmanship Disputes

- Construction defects affecting safety, durability, or code compliance
- Improper installation of flooring systems, doors, hardware, or fixtures
- Disputes involving renovation work performed in active, occupied facilities

High-Risk & Specialized Environments

- Airports, transit facilities, and secure or restricted-access locations
- Healthcare facilities, municipal buildings, schools, and government properties
- Retail, grocery, restaurant, and mixed-use commercial environments

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Prior Testimony, Case Experience & Professional Fees

Mr. Gaston has provided expert consulting, analysis, and testimony in dozens of matters involving premises liability, construction safety, maintenance standards, and building code compliance. Testimony matters are listed below. A current fee schedule and case list is available upon request.

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Aguilar v. Creative Carpets

Case No.: 2023 L 6509, Circuit Court of Cook County, Illinois

Case Type: Slip and fall / personal injury

Retained By: Law Office of Debra Crystal (Plaintiff)

Side: Plaintiff

Work Performed: Review, Report, Deposition

Deposition Date: September 11, 2025

Englehaupt v. A.B. Edward Enterprises

Case No.: 01-23-003-0263, AAA Arbitration

Case Type: Construction defect

Retained By: Rick Hoffman, Cohen, Salk & Hoffman, P.C. (Defendant)

Side: Defendant

Work Performed: Site Visit, Review, Report, Arbitration Hearing

Scott v. Hartz Construction

Case No.: 2022 LA 000351, Circuit Court of Will County, Illinois

Case Type: Construction defect

Retained By: Andrew Clott, Roetzel & Andress (Plaintiff)

Side: Plaintiff

Work Performed: Review, Site Visit, Report, Deposition, Trial

Deposition Date: April 15, 2025

Trial Date: November 20, 2025

Talley v. Thunder Basin Homes

Case No.: 40491, Gillette, Wyoming

Case Type: Construction defect

Retained By: Seth Shumaker (Plaintiff)

Side: Plaintiff

Work Performed: Site Visit, Review, Report, Deposition

Deposition Date: October 15, 2024

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