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CANADA POST
CASE STUDY

How Canada Post and INBIODYN Created a Safer Way to Prepare Postal Workers for Slip, Trip, & Fall Risks



A partnership-driven approach to experiential learning, behavior change, and nationwide impact

The Shared Context

On a winter morning, a delivery agent steps from a cleared sidewalk onto a patch of unseen ice. There's no time to think — only to react.

In that split second, long-ingrained walking habits take over. For thousands of postal workers, those reflexive movements have led to slips, trips, & falls (STFs) — injuries that occur not because people don't *know* better, but because the body defaults to what feels natural under stress.

Canada Post employs more than 35,000 delivery agents working across a wide range of environments, urban sidewalks, rural roads, stairs, ramps, curbs, and driveways, often under challenging weather conditions.

Despite sustained efforts to improve safety through footwear programs, work practices, and awareness initiatives, STFs remained Canada Post's leading cause of workplace injury. In 2023 alone, STFs accounted for approximately 40% of all injuries and lost-time injuries across the organization.

"Slip, trip, and fall injuries weren't a knowledge problem for us—they were a behavior problem." ~ Canada Post, International Ergonomics Association Webinar

Canada Post's Health & Safety leadership recognized that while many environmental and equipment-based controls were already in place, human movement and ingrained walking habits continued to play a significant role in injury risk.

Knowing that money alone would not solve the problem, Canada Post and INBIODYN framed the work as a shared design challenge: how to help people safely **unlearn** ingrained walking habits—**not learn something new**, but replace reflexive behaviors that increase risk under real-world conditions.

The Shared Challenge

Delivery agents routinely encounter hazards that cannot always be engineered away: icy patches, uneven surfaces, poor lighting, distractions, and time pressure.

Canada Post's challenge was not a lack of policies or knowledge. Employees understood the risks. The gap existed between what people knew and how they instinctively moved when encountering unexpected surfaces.

"We weren't looking for another awareness program—we needed a way for people to experience." ~ Canada Post, Health & Safety Leadership

Decision Point

INBIODYN doesn't teach people what to do — it retrains how their bodies respond when balance is suddenly compromised.

How do you train people for **high-consequence, low-frequency** events in a way that changes reflexive behavior, not just awareness?

Traditional classroom or video-based training could explain techniques, but it could not replicate the physical experience of instability that triggers automatic responses.

What the Team Needed to Learn

Early collaboration between Canada Post's national & local safety teams, joint health & safety committees, and INBIODYN focused on understanding.

- Where delivery agents most commonly lose balance
- Which walking habits unintentionally increase fall risk
- How posture, head position, and foot placement affect stability
- Whether experiential learning could influence both participants and observers

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> ***"Once people felt the difference in their balance, the lesson stuck."*** ~ Canada Post, Health & Safety Leadership

One key insight emerged quickly; many people increase their risk of falling by looking down while walking, shifting body weight forward and compromising balance. This behavior often occurs when encountering unexpected surfaces. INBIODYN doesn't teach people what to do—it retrains how their bodies respond under risk. This reinforced the idea that **behavior change would require physical experience,** not explanation alone. Efficacy was validated through a Canada Post pilot program, supported by injury data and comparative analysis.

How we partnered

INBIODYN customized its evidenced-based training to meet Canada Post where its team could start. Backed by peer-reviewed research and real-world injury data, INBIODYN's Slip Simulator™ consistently delivers measurable reductions in STF incidents, where traditional training falls short. Together, INBIODYN and Canada Post ran a Slip Simulator™ pilot that prioritized realism, safety, and employee trust.

Key elements of the training included:

- Simulating real delivery conditions using ramps, stairs, curbs, and uneven surfaces
- Allowing participants to practice safely while secured in a harness
- Offering employees the option to observe peers if they chose not to enter the harness
- Incorporating delivery equipment such as satchels and parcels to reflect day-to-day tasks
- Training Canada Post instructors to deliver the program following initial sessions

> ***"...not a single trained employee reported a lost-time injury during the winter following the pilot. Even more encouraging is that those who observed the training also reported fewer injuries, demonstrating the wide-reaching impact of the program."~*** *Nadia Afara, health and safety manager at Canada Post quoted in an online article (December 5, 2024) by Canadian Occupational Safety https://tinyurl.com/4eta8ccb*

The pilot ran for approximately 16 weeks in 2022 and included 21 training stops across Ontario and Atlantic Canada. About 550 delivery agents participated, with training records available for 483 employees.

Participation was voluntary, and the training was supported by both national and local joint health and safety committees.

Employee Experience and Engagement

Employee feedback from the pilot was overwhelmingly positive. Survey responses described the training as engaging, memorable, and immediately applicable to daily work.

Participants consistently noted that physically experiencing instability, while remaining safe, made it easier to understand why specific techniques mattered. Observing colleagues also proved valuable, reinforcing learning through shared experience.

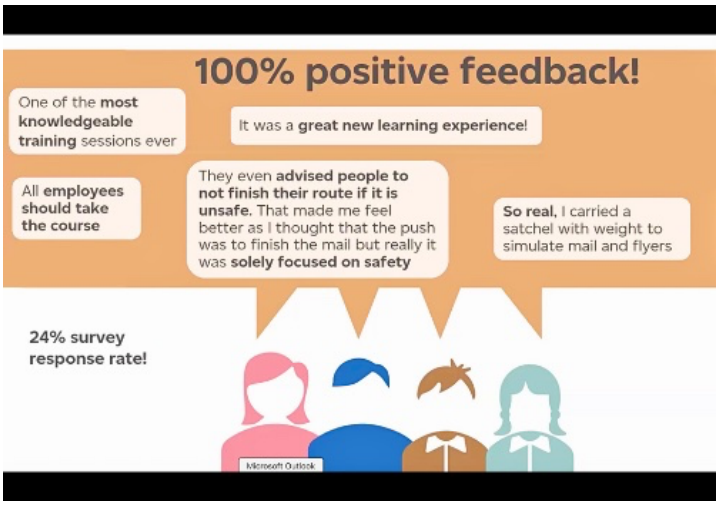


Figure 1Source: IEA Webinar #46

What the Data Shows: Injury Outcomes



Canada Post said the data its team gathered after the 2022 Pilot Program is encouraging and supported the continuation of the program.

During the Winter Following the 2022 Pilot Program Training not a single employee trained on the Slip Simulator™ had a lost-work time injury! This positive trend continued one year later. Canada Post counted all the STF injuries and only 8% of trained employees reported STF injuries compared to more than 6 times that number – 51% - of untrained employees. If you took the Slip Simulator™ training, you were more than six times less likely to be injured than someone who didn't.

> ***"The most encouraging signal wasn't just fewer injuries—it was how quickly behavior changed."*** ~ Canada Post, International Ergonomics Association Webinar

While not a controlled laboratory study, these results closely mirrored findings from other organizations and research demonstrating the effectiveness of experiential, kinesthetic training approaches

Why the Partnership Worked

Several factors contributed to the success of the pilot:

- **Shared ownership:** Canada Post safety leaders shaped how the training was delivered and evaluated. Leaders across the organization – EHS, union, and employees of all backgrounds participated in the development and execution. No one group failed to invest the time required to get the job done.
- **Realistic simulation:** Scenarios reflected actual delivery environments and tasks
- **Voluntary participation:** Employees chose how to engage, building trust and buy-in
- **Iterative learning:** Feedback from participants informed ongoing refinement
- **Customization**: INBIODYN's engineers worked closely with Canada Post's team to tailor the mobile units to their operational preferences, climatic conditions, and national and provincial safety requirements
- **Long-term view:** To support long-term program sustainability, INBIODYN also developed online training modules for Canada Post instructors, enabling remote learning and consistent knowledge transfer. This approach aligned with Canada Post's commitment to maintaining well-prepared trainers and INBIODYN's philosophy of meeting customers where they are—supporting both rollout and ongoing execution of training standards.

Why This Matters to Leaders

- Reduced injury costs without adding enforcement burden
- Stronger union buy-in through voluntary participation
- Faster adoption than traditional training
- Scalable across regions and job roles

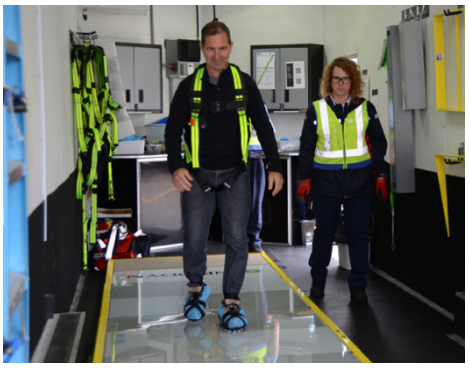


Figure 2: Source - Canada Post 2022 Annual Report. "Nearly 900 employees across 26 sites practiced walking on a slippery surface in a safe and controlled environment."

From Pilot to Nationwide Implementation

Based on the pilot's results, Canada Post moved forward with a national rollout of Slip Simulator™ training.

Canada Post purchased two mobile Slip Simulator™ units and stationed them at Canada Post's largest delivery agent training facilities. Their initial focus was on new delivery agents, who are statistically more vulnerable to injury.

New hires participate in one-hour training sessions, with the option to either enter the harness or observe.

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"What started as a pilot became a capability we could scale." ~ Canada Post, International Ergonomics Association Webinar

Looking Ahead

Canada Post continues to evaluate outcomes, integrate experiential training with other safety initiatives, and explore how behavior-focused learning can further reduce its leading cause of injury.

What began as a pilot has become a scalable capability — one that addresses risk where traditional training reaches its limits.

For organizations facing persistent slip, trip, and fall injuries despite strong policies and equipment, this partnership offers a clear lesson: **lasting safety improvements require training that reaches reflexes, not just awareness.**

The shared goal remains simple — and essential: helping every employee make it safe and make it home.

Future phases under discussion include:

- Additional mobile units to serve western Canada
- Annual roadshows to reach more sites
- Refresher training to reinforce learned behaviors
- Permanent installations at high-volume training schools

Sources:
Slip Simulator™ Training at Ontario Power Generation, INBIODYN on YouTube
Canada Post takes firm stance on slips, trips, and falls, Canadian Occupational Safety
IEA Webinar #46 How do you walk safely? A look into using experiential learning to reduce STF, December 2, 2024