Floor Buffer Safety Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

Floor buffer machines come in many styles and power levels from the standard electric stick model to battery and propane. There’s powered walk-behind models and ride-on machines. They use different pad types and abrasive factors to clean, wax, buff, and strip hard surface floors.

What’s the Danger

COMMON PROBLEMS WITH FLOOR BUFFER MACHINES

1. FLOOR BUFFER NOT TURNING ON

Possible Cause: Not Plugged In

If your floor buffer will not turn on, check to see that the buffer is plugged into the wall outlet. The plug may have fallen out or have been placed in a faulty outlet.

The Fix: Double-check that the issue is not originating from the wall outlet rather than the floor buffer. Test the outlet by plugging in a second device to check for power. If the second device does not receive power, the wall outlet is not working. If the second device does receive power, the problem is not with the wall outlet.

Possible Cause: Damaged or Frayed Power Cords

2. FLOOR BUFFER WON’T STAY ON

Possible Cause: Floor Buffer Trips Wall Circuit

Circuits trip when too much power is being drawn or too much strain is put on the circuit. If the motor draws high amperage, the electrical circuit breaker will stop providing power.

The Fix: Test to see if the outlet will provide power to another device. If there is power to the second device, the problem is not with the outlet. The buffer circuit breaker may have tripped.

Possible Cause: Floor Buffer Trips Machine Circuit

3. FLOOR BUFFER IS VIBRATING MORE THAN NORMAL

Possible Cause: Floor Pad Is Installed Incorrectly

The floor pad must be centered on the machine. If the pad is not centered on the pad driver, it will not be balanced and will cause the machine to shake or vibrate on the floor.

The Fix: Removing and reinstalling the pad should fix the problem.

Possible Cause: Floor Pad Is Damaged Or Worn

A damaged or worn floor pad will not sit evenly on the floor and can cause the pad driver to wobble while it is rotating.

4. FLOOR BUFFER IS DULLING OR LEAVING SCRATCHES ON THE FLOOR

If your floor buffer is dulling or scratching the floor, your floor buffer is probably not broken.

Possible Cause: Wrong Floor Pad

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

PROPER FLOOR BUFFER SAFETY PROTOCOL

Get training and read the manufacturer’s instructions for your floor machine. Read the safety data sheets (SDS) for all floor maintenance chemicals and get training on the use and proper mix ratios.

Wear the proper safety equipment such as comfortable, slip-resistant shoes or boots and long pants. Always wear gloves and splash goggles when mixing and dispensing chemicals.

Conduct floor maintenance when there are few people around; Early mornings, late evenings, and weekends.

Check your floor machine before you begin. Cords for electric stick models should not have cuts or exposed wires.

Keep a good grip on the handles to maintain control of the floor machine. Remain aware of your surroundings to avoid hitting people, glass windows, and doors or falling down stairs or inclines and off raised surfaces.

To avoid trip hazards, store floor machines out of the way. Electric floor machines should be unplugged and the cord loosely wrapped.

BEST FLOOR BUFFER SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

Floor cleaning can be hazardous when not performed properly. While hazards simply come with the territory, there is much you can do to minimize the risk of danger.

- Insert floor buffer plug into receptacles with similar prong or blade patterns.
- Only use floor cleaners and waxes that are designed for floor buffer application.
- Use floor buffer cleaners and waxes according to the manufacturer’s directions.
- Never use a floor buffer with a damaged electrical cord or plug.
- Keep both hands on the handles when operating a floor buffer.
- Do not run the floor buffer over electrical cords, door stops, or other obstructions.
- Unplug an unattended floor buffer.
- Do not yank on the electrical cord to disconnect a floor buffer. Grip the plug when disconnecting a floor buffer.
- Unplug the floor buffer before changing the buffing pad or cleaning block.
- Never try to move a floor buffer by pulling on the electrical cord.
- Carefully operate a floor buffer across changes in floor surface texture to prevent strong pulling motions and loss of control of the buffer.

- Cleaning solutions used with a floor buffer may leave wet floor surfaces. Post signs warning of wet floors near the area being cleaned.
- Use proper techniques to prevent back strain when lifting or moving a floor buffer.
- Unplug the floor buffer before performing maintenance or repairs.
- NEVER use propane powered buffers in enclosed areas.

Final Precaution – Employee Training

The best way to avoid hazards is to maintain a janitorial safety training program. A training program addresses safety concerns and trains employees. Some important topics to cover in a program include chemical hazards, electrical hazards, ergonomic hazards, and slips and falls.

FINAL WORD

Floor buffers are an important part of your hard floor care program and when your floor buffer isn’t working properly, it is costing you time and money.