

Janitorial Safety Meeting Kit

What's At Stake

Janitors, custodians, and housekeepers providing services in homes, schools, and offices face a variety of tasks and hazards. Prepare for these by seeking instruction and training for the janitorial work you will perform.

The cleaning industry is all about production rates. How quickly and efficiently janitors clean our customers' locations. Unfortunately, in trying to increase their speed, cleaning technicians sometimes cut corners when it came to safety. We should provide consistent, engaging training for our cleaners. Business owners should demand it and OSHA requires it. Accidents are no laughing matter and OSHA fines can put cleaning companies out of business for good.

What's the Danger

Prevent workplace accidents with proper employee training. Because of the chemicals, equipment, and hazards that are a part of a cleaning company's daily routine, employers should take added precautions and safety measures. Make sure workers are aware of company's policies, procedures and up to date training.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

JANITORIAL BLUE CHIP SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR WORKERS

Know the common hazards in your work environment. Because you move throughout the building, you may be the first to spot one. Place a warning sign near hazards and report them immediately.

1. Proper P. E./Hygiene

Wear comfortable, slip-resistant shoes to avoid slips and falls and long-sleeved shirts and long pants. Put on chemical-resistant

gloves and splash goggles when pouring, mixing, and using chemicals. Work gloves protect your hands when you do odd jobs. Safety glasses protect your eyes from debris and dust. Wash your hands before smoking and eating and between tasks for good personal hygiene.

1. Chemicals

You use chemicals to clean, disinfect, and strip surfaces; read their Safety Data Sheets (SDS). Because chemicals are often concentrated, know the proper mix ratio and use. Stay in well-ventilated areas and never mix chemicals unless instructed to do so by the manufacturer. Take care around hot water to avoid burns.

1. Ergonomics

Janitorial tasks include heavy lifting, material handling, and repetitive motions. To avoid back strains and injuries, keep your muscles strong and stretch before, during and after work. Take mini breaks throughout the day and rotate your tasks. Learn proper lifting techniques and know what you can safely lift; ask for help with heavy or awkward loads.

1. Materials Handling

Hand trucks, rolling buckets, and housekeeping carts help you move heavy loads and keep your supplies near you. Keep them in good condition with easily rolling wheels. Keep the load in front of you and lean in the direction you are going. Push the load; pulling can lead to strains and injuries. Watch for people, obstacles, slopes and drop offs in your path. Remember, when working at heights, practice ladder safety.

1. Floor Maintenance/Machines

Floor maintenance is a main duty for janitorial workers. Perform floor maintenance when few people are around and always use caution signs for wet floors and spills. Mopping and sweeping are repetitive motions, so avoid a tight grip and use proper posture. Vacuums and floor machines should be inspected daily before use; keep cords coiled and close to you to avoid tripping.

1. Housekeeping

Removing garbage, recycling, paper, and debris from the workplace is good housekeeping and fire prevention. Garbage bags may contain broken glass and other sharp materials, so wear work gloves, and carry the load away from your body. Garbage may contain materials and needles that are contaminated with blood and body fluids. Never reach into a garbage can and do not pack it down with your feet.

JANITORIAL SAFETY OVERVIEW

- Make sure employees knew how to use a piece of equipment before taking and using it on the job site. Equipment should only be used for its intended purpose.
- Remind employees to always put out caution signs before mopping, burnishing or doing other floor maintenance. They should never use equipment such as mops or brooms to block or detour a walkway. They should only use the proper warning devices such as tape, cones, and wet floor signs.
- Educate employees on how to lift properly. Always lift by using the legs, and not by bending over, using the back. In addition, twisting or turning while lifting can seriously injure the back.
- Employees should always check electrical cords on cleaning equipment before plugging in the item. They should not use the equipment if the cord is frayed, or the prongs are bent or broken. Employees should never yank electric cords out of outlets and never run over cords with equipment.
- Communicate what personal protective equipment is required for each job they are doing, and how to properly put on and take off PPE.
- If employees notice any potential safety hazards, they should report it immediately to their supervisor so we can either take care of it or let the client know.
- Keep chemicals and treated mops away from furnaces, light bulbs and other heat sources.
- Never leave trash in the janitor's closet, as it can become a fire hazard.

- Use rubber wedges to prop open doors. Never use a piece of equipment or broom handle to keep a door open.
- If they need to move an item that is on the floor such as trash receptacles or boxes, never place it on top of a desk.
- When moving objects, mats, or boxes, lift the item – don't pull or tug it over to a new spot. If necessary, the employee should ask another employee for help.

FINAL WORD

Employers can mitigate the possibility that their staff will sustain an injury on the job by adopting thorough safety policies and risk management strategies. When employers are able to manage risk and address common hazards, they can help protect their staff while also safeguarding their companies against liability and loss.