



## Cleaning – Janitorial Safety

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.

### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

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, 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.

You use chemicals to clean, disinfect, and strip surfaces; read their material safety data sheets (MSDS). 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.



### AVOID INJURY

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.
- Use hand trucks, rolling buckets, and housekeeping carts to 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.

### FLOOR MAINTENANCE

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.



## REMOVING GARBAGE

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 don't pack it down with your feet.

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. Safety depends on you.

*This Alliant Risk Control Consulting fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.*

**For more information on this topic, please contact Alliant Risk Control Consulting at (949) 260-5042 or [riskcontrol@alliant.com](mailto:riskcontrol@alliant.com)**

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