

Janitorial Workload Newsletter



Spring 2024

Announcements: New Name

Cleaners' Occupational Injury Reduction Emphasis (CORE)

We have changed our name! While we started out as the “Janitorial Workload Study” – going forward we would like to include a wider range of commercial cleaners and their occupational health and safety needs. We have updated [our webpage](#) with some new information, including a description of the currently available version of the [workload calculator tool](#), and our current goals, which are:

- Expand the janitorial workload calculator tool and release a web-based version of the tool.
- Release the user manual (Spring 2024).
- Continue to conduct detailed worksite observations, to expand and refine the calculator.
- Evaluate tools and cleaning methods to determine how they influence the risk for injury.
- Continue to interview injured janitors to identify root causes of common injuries and illnesses.
- Create prevention & intervention tools to help keep janitors safe and working.

More updates are coming to the look of our publications– stay tuned!

Hazard Spotlight: Chemical Exposures

Every month, we review workers' compensation claims from janitors to identify common hazards. Janitors and cleaners are regularly exposed to a variety of chemical hazards on the job. Recently, multiple janitors have been injured or made ill at work by drinking from bottles that contained chemicals.

When our research started, we conducted a statewide survey of WA janitors to ask about hazards including workload and ergonomic risks, chemical exposures, as well as other work organization factors and safety issues. Of the 620 complete response, 35% of janitors reported that they had some kind of irritation from chemical exposures (either eye, skin, and/or breathing).



Washington State Department of
Labor & Industries

To learn more about the study, call/text/email SHARP
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Our tip sheet this quarter is a reminder to **never** put chemicals into water bottles, cups, or other unlabeled containers. Chemical containers should **always be clearly labeled** with the product name and hazard information.

- The Division of Occupational Safety & Health (DOSH) at L&I has created a [Workers' Guide to Hazardous Chemicals](#) (in English and Spanish) which is a free resource that provides information on using chemicals in the workplace, gives an overview of common hazard labels and universal hazard symbols, and provides answers to common questions, a safety checklist, and L&I contact information for those who want additional help and information.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has also created universal hazard symbol quick cards that can be used to identify common hazard information ([English](#) and [Spanish](#)).

Look for more information on chemical hazards in the next newsletter as well!