

## Introduction to Clean Sweep Safe work Practices for Custodians

Some of the tasks that are performed by custodians at work – such as lifting, reaching, and repeating the same movements – can strain our bodies. In some situations, these tasks can result in an injury to the muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, blood vessels, and joints of the neck, shoulders, arms, wrists, legs, and back.

Custodians work independently and are required to maintain different areas of the school. The main job duties include:

- Sweeping
- Vacuuming
- Washing down desks and tables
- Emptying garbage cans
- Mopping floors
- Lifting and moving furniture
- Cleaning bathrooms, classrooms, and common areas
- Shoveling snow

These are the types of jobs that require force, repetition, and awkward postures and can put custodians at risk of injury. Overexertion and sprain and strain injuries are so common in school custodians that they are thought to be just part of the job. This is based on the belief that the custodial work cannot be changed, and therefore the aches, pains and injuries are inevitable. Changing work practices, an ageing workforce, and a lack of understanding of custodial issues have all contributed to high injury rates among school custodians. This has led to challenges in developing safe work procedures and effective worker training aimed at preventing these types of injuries.

The purpose of this guide is to show ways of making custodial work safer and easier so that the risks of sprain and strain injuries are reduced. It is not possible to fix all things immediately. This requires constant attention and training. Sometimes new and better equipment is needed, and sometimes worker technique needs to be changed. In some cases both equipment and technique need to be changed. It is possible that newer and better solutions have and will become available. Staying tuned to the jobs that we do and the demands of the tasks within those jobs is important to solving the ongoing problems common to custodial work.

## A Clean Sweep Safe Work Practices for Custodians

Developed by :  
British Columbia School Safety Association  
and WorkSafeBC.

The purpose of this guide is to show ways of making custodial work safer and easier so that the risks of sprain and strain injuries are reduced.

It is not meant to be a legal substitute for, or a legal interpretation of, the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

# BCSSA

## British Columbia School Safety Association

# WORK SAFE BC

## WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### Acknowledgments

Department of Industrial Relations, CAL/OSHA  
Consultation, Service, Research and Education Unit, for  
photographs and text from: *Working Safer and Easier for  
Janitors Custodians and Housekeepers*

UBC Land and Building Services  
Delta School District No. 37

Formatted by Flip Productions Ltd  
Nanaimo, BC Canada  
1-888-220-FLIP (3547)  
www.flipproductions.com  
Made in Germany by Infoflip Ulm e.K.

-flip  
IF.G.01.00183.B.01

## A CLEAN SWEEP



### Safe Work Practices for Custodians

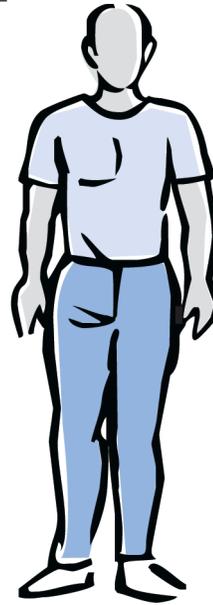
June 2006

## 1 Know Your Body

Custodians, janitors, and housekeepers suffer injuries that frequently involve bone, cartilage, muscle, and nerves.

### **The most common body parts affected:**

- Neck
- Back
- Shoulders
- Arms
- Elbows
- Wrists/hands/fingers
- Knees



### **What Causes Injuries?**

Certain actions can lead to fatigue, discomfort, or pain when you do them over and over without a break. Some examples of this include:

- ◆ Exerting force to perform a task or to use a tool (e.g., lifting tables or scrubbing with a brush)
- ◆ Working in awkward postures, such as bending or twisting the back, overhead reaching for dusting, or mopping with elbows away from the body
- ◆ Remaining in the same position for a long time with little or no movement
- ◆ Continuous pressure from a hard surface or edge on any part of the body (for example, kneeling or crawling)
- ◆ Working in hot or cold temperatures
- ◆ Holding equipment that vibrates (for example, the handle of a pressure washer)

### **Noticing Problems**

If you feel discomfort, pain, or other symptoms, you must either change the way you work or the equipment you use. If no changes are made, your symptoms may get worse and keep you from working at all.

### **Watch for these signs & symptoms:**

- Pain
- Numbness
- Tingling
- Swelling
- Weakness
- Decreased range of motion
- Cold hands
- Changes in skin color

**Report any injuries  
to your supervisor  
right away**

### **If you Develop any Symptoms**

- ◆ Talk with your supervisor about your symptoms right away
- ◆ Seek medical treatment to prevent the problem from getting worse
- ◆ Work with your supervisor and health & safety committee to find the cause of the problem
- ◆ Always look for better ways to do your job

## 1 Know Your Body

## 2 Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls

### REMEMBER

One of the most common hazards for custodians is slipping on wet floors or tripping over an object. A slip or trip may result in a fall. A fall may cause injuries such as broken bones, head injuries, sprains, strains or bruises.

◆ **Slips** occur when there is too little traction between the footwear and the floor, such as:

- Wet, waxed, oily floors
- Loose mats or carpets
- Weather hazards (ice, rain, snow)
- Improper footwear (slippery soles)

◆ **Trips** occur when your foot hits something that causes you to lose your balance and fall, such as:

- Poor lighting
- Clutter
- Wrinkled carpeting
- Obstructed view
- Cables/cords in the open
- Bottom drawers open
- Uneven surfaces (steps, thresholds)

◆ **Good Housekeeping** is the first and most important step in preventing falls due to slips and trips. Non-slip flooring, specialty footwear, or training on techniques of walking and safe falling are only effective with good housekeeping practices.

- Clean all spills and debris immediately
- Mark spills and wet areas with warning signs and barricades



*Slipping hazard*

- Spread grease-absorbent compound on oily surfaces
- Keep walkways and doorways free of clutter

- Secure mats, rugs, and carpets that do not lay flat by tacking or taping them down
- Always close cabinet or storage drawers
- Cover cords/cables that cross walkways
- Keep working areas and walkways well lit

◆ **Footwear:** use properly fitted footwear in areas where floors may be oily or wet (outdoors). Proper footwear increases comfort and prevents fatigue, which improves safety. No footwear has anti-slip properties for every condition (consult manufacturer).



*Tripping hazard*

◆ **Appropriate Pace:** avoid rushing through your work to reduce the chances of a fall.

- Take your time and pay attention to where you are going
- Adjust your pace to suit the type of flooring and the tasks you are doing
- Walk with your feet pointed slightly outward
- Make wide turns at corners



*Carrying large objects obstruct your view*

◆ **Proper Visibility**

- Always use available light sources to provide sufficient light for your tasks
- Use a flashlight when entering a dark room
- Ensure the things you carry, push, or pull, do not prevent you from seeing obstructions or spills

## 2 Preventing Slips, Trips & Falls

### 3 Water Pails & Buckets (1)

#### REMEMBER

Water pails/buckets are heavy and unstable loads. Use proper body movement and safe work procedures to prevent injuries.

#### Filling

- ◆ Use a hose to avoid lifting
- ◆ Use a smaller container to top it up if there is no hose
- ◆ Fill pail to 1/2 (one-half) or 2/3 (two-thirds) full to reduce the weight



#### Lifting

- ◆ Use two hands
- ◆ Grasp opposite sides of the rim of the pail to stabilize your body and keep the pail from swinging
- ◆ Use grips that allow elbows to remain at or near your sides



#### Carrying

#### REMEMBER

A thin handle on a bucket causes significant contact pressure on the hand with prolonged use.



- ◆ Increase the diameter of the handle by adding padding or by attaching a thicker handle – you have greater grip strength and feel less pressure on your hand
- ◆ Wear gloves to increase padding around the handle
- ◆ Do not overfill the bucket with water/washcloths/sponges
- ◆ Distribute weight evenly by dividing the contents equally into 2 buckets

#### TIPS

- Alternate hands
- Mark buckets with a 2/3 fill line
- Do not overfill the bucket
- Keep buckets light enough to carry comfortably



### 3 Water Pails & Buckets (1)

## 4 Water Pails & Buckets (2)

### REMEMBER

Emptying mop buckets while dumping dirty water involves lifting. Movements include carrying a heavy load, bending at the waist, awkward arm and hand postures.

### Emptying

- ◆ Use floor drains if available to reduce the vertical distance of the lift
- ◆ Lift the pail from the cart to the edge of the sink, supporting the weight on the sink as you empty it



### No Floor Drain Available

- ◆ Use a smaller container to 'bail out' some of the water
- ◆ Place a platform in front of the sink and lift the bucket onto the platform – then tilt and lever over the edge of the sink to empty
- ◆ Consider emptying into a toilet
- ◆ Remove the wringer mechanism and use one hand to tilt the bucket to empty it; avoid lifting the full weight of the bucket; when the drain is protected by a low barrier, use the barrier as a pivot point to lever the bucket to empty it



*Use good body mechanics when emptying buckets into floor sink*



*Rest edge of pail against the sink*

### TIPS

- Use the smallest amount of cleaning solution possible
- Use mop buckets with a drain opening
- Use sinks mounted on the ground

## 4 Water Pails & Buckets (2)

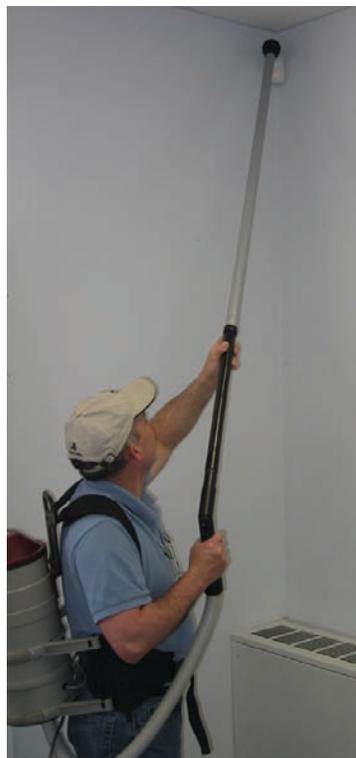
## 5 Cleaning Walls

### Cleaning Walls

- ◆ Stand upright and use a lightweight long-handled mop or squeegee
- ◆ Adjust the length of a telescopic handle to minimize awkward bending and overreaching
- ◆ Alternate lead hands to avoid fatigue
- ◆ Use your legs, not just your arms, to generate force

### Using Telescopic Wall Washing Tools

- ◆ Keep your hands in front of you and between your shoulders
- ◆ Work in a small area of the wall and try to keep your elbows below shoulder level
- ◆ Face the wall and move the tool up and down while:
  - Using a combination of small arm movements while walking sideways
  - or**
  - Holding the tool across your body while walking forward to minimize arm movements
- ◆ Extend your washing range by walking forward to wash higher and walking back to wash lower



Use lightweight plastic extension handles when vacuuming walls



Attach a long handled pole to a mop or squeegee

## 5 Cleaning Walls

## 6 Wiping & Dusting

### REMEMBER

Extending the shoulder and arm to wipe forcefully with the whole hand for long periods of time is tiring. Wringing wet wash cloths produces forceful and repetitious twisting and bending of the wrist.

### Cloth selection-size

Cloths should be large enough to be efficient but small enough to squeeze out excess water with no more than two squeezing motions.



### Wringing

### REMEMBER

The twisting force of the wringing action gets out more water than a simple squeeze, but this can cause wrist injury when done repetitively.

- ◆ To avoid injury, hold one hand above the other to produce a squeeze action – this allows both wrist joints to be in a straight neutral position

### Wiping Horizontal/Vertical Surfaces

- ◆ Use effective cleaning products and let the cleaning products do the work
- ◆ Divide work into sections to allow task rotation
- ◆ Alternate arms to reduce muscle fatigue
- ◆ Use well designed tools that match your height, strength and endurance



### Using a Desk Washer

A desk washer is a sponge mop with an extendable angled handle. It encourages the use of an 'elbows in' posture and allows you to remain upright. Use it to clean:

- ◆ Large unobstructed surfaces
- ◆ Lightly soiled surfaces where no scraping or scouring is required
- ◆ Low tables
- ◆ Non-streaking surfaces

## 6 Wiping & Dusting

## 7 High Dusting

### REMEMBER

Reaching up while holding a duster for long periods of time requires awkward and fixed positions of the arms, shoulders, and neck. This task can lead to pain and stiffness in the neck, shoulders, arms and upper neck.

### Work within your reach

Extend your reach by using high dusting tools with telescoping handles or a ladder.



### High Dusting

- ◆ Wear face/eye protection
- ◆ Stand at an angle and not directly under the dusting area
- ◆ Keep elbows close to the body to minimize over-reaching



*Alternate right and left hands at the end of the pole handle*

### High Dusting Tools

- ◆ Use lightweight tools with telescoping handles and bendable necks
- ◆ Work with your hands in front of your body in the area between your shoulders to minimize effort
- ◆ Bend the neck of the handle to align it with the surface to be cleaned
- ◆ Extend the telescopic handle and step back from the wall to improve neck position

### Over-the-shoulder Activities

- ◆ Limit time spent in this position
- ◆ Allow for more frequent work breaks
- ◆ Rotate tasks regularly to change the physical demands

## 7 High Dusting

## 8 Sweeping

### REMEMBER

Sweeping floors may involve awkward positions of wrists and prolonged contact pressure on hands. Also, the back and neck are often in an awkward forward bent posture.



- Alternate right and left hands at the top of the mop handle

Use lightweight brooms, standup dustpans, and lobby brooms



**Do not bend your back.  
Use tools that allow you to remain upright.  
If needed, bend your knees and not your back.**



- Wear knee pads and kneel down to get closer to the work

Add a foam sleeve over the broom handle for a better and more comfortable grip



## 8 Sweeping

## 9 Lifting & Moving Material

### REMEMBER

Repeated lifting and carrying of loads increases the risk of back injury.

- ◆ Do not lift anything that is too heavy – check the weight to be sure that you are comfortable with the lift
- ◆ Use handles, cutouts, or handholds, if available
- ◆ Use carts with large wheels
- ◆ Bend your knees and lift with your back straight
- ◆ Keep the load close to the body and do not twist

**Large wheels roll easily and require less force over door thresholds, elevator gaps, etc.**



*Use a power jack*



*Use a three-way dolly*

### Get help

- ◆ Plan the lift and talk to your partner
- ◆ Make sure team members understand their role
- ◆ Use lifting equipment wherever possible



*Work with a partner and coordinate the move*

## 9 Lifting & Moving Material

## 10 Moving Barrels & Carts

### REMEMBER

The more supplies and tools loaded on the barrel or cart, the greater the force needed to push it, particularly on carpet. Materials unevenly distributed around the barrel or cart also contribute to instability. Running the barrel over uneven surfaces, such as elevator gaps or over thresholds, can cause the barrel to tip over.



*Pay attention to uneven surfaces*



*Ensure there is even distribution on rim caddy*

- ◆ Stock the cart or barrel only with materials you will need
- ◆ Set up a caddy and a caddy apron at exactly opposite sides of the barrel – weight is more evenly distributed, and the barrel is less likely to tip over
- ◆ Place the most frequently used products/tools closer to you



*Slow down when rolling over thresholds*



*A multiple-use hand cart reduces the need for carrying*

**If the barrel tips let go of it –  
don't try to stop it as you can strain yourself**

## 10 Moving Barrels & Carts

## 11 Moving Furniture (1)

### Furniture Dollies

- ◆ Use table, desk or chair dollies whenever possible to avoid lifting and carrying furniture
- ◆ Stabilize the load with straps when needed and consider using a team of workers



*Use rolling carts to move stacks of chairs & tables*

### REMEMBER

When moving tables/desks/chairs a short distance, pushing or pulling them is better than lifting. Protect your lower back by bending your knees and using your legs to power the move.

### Pushing Furniture

#### Make pushing easier by:

- Lifting one end to reduce the drag on the floor
- Using a carpet slider to reduce the friction



### Pulling Furniture

#### Pull only when necessary and when the:

- Table or chair is up against the wall and needs to be pulled out to give you room to push
- Combined push/pull effort of more than one worker is available



## 11 Moving Furniture (1)

## 12 Moving Furniture (2)

### REMEMBER

Moving and arranging heavy pieces of furniture involves forceful exertions. It is always better to use a mechanical aid.

### 'Walking' or Pivoting Furniture

When furniture is heavy or awkward, it may be necessary to 'pivot' it. By lifting and pivoting one end at a time the furniture is 'walked' in a zigzag pattern.

### 'Flipping' a Table

When placing one table upside down on top of another table, manual lifting can be reduced by overlapping the edges of the tables. This way the weight can be reduced by resting most of the weight on a pivot point thereby 'flipping' the table by levering it over the pivot point.

This can be done by one person on a small table or by two people for a larger table.

### Two Person Lift/Carry

When a lift or carry is required, two or more workers located at each end can perform the task, either with a side stepping action or



a forward or backward step. Avoid twisting the spine during lifting activities.



### TIPS

- Use equipment and devices to help move furniture
- Rotate tasks
- Use spring-loaded tables on wheels to reduce the awkward posture and force
- Always ask for help or work as a team

## 12 Moving Furniture (2)

## 13 Mopping: Bucket & Mop Selection

### Bucket selection

#### Buckets should have:

- A low, wide, stable base
- Large castors
- Molded hand grips
- Large openings
- Separate compartments for clean and dirty water
- Light weight wringers that:
  - Are easy to use
  - Are easily attached to the mop bucket
  - Let you use your body weight to operate it



### Wet mop selection

#### The mop handle should:

- Be between your chin and eye level
- Be no wider than two arm lengths
- Have a diameter that allows for a comfortable grip
- Have a mop head that is an appropriate size and not too heavy to move when wet



*Pad the handle*

**Do not lift a filled mop bucket – it is heavy and unstable**



*Mop head width allows for steering around objects without compromising posture*

## 13 Mopping: Bucket & Mop Selection

## 14 Mopping: Wringing

### REMEMBER

A wet mop can weigh up to 25 pounds when fully saturated. Wet mopping can cause significant contact stress over the hand and wrist. It also adds strain to the low back.

#### Wringing a mop

- ◆ Bend your knees and keep your back straight as you push the mop wringer down
- ◆ Face the wringer lever with a straight elbow
- ◆ Use your body weight to press down on the lever
- ◆ Use a mop bucket raised off the floor to reduce the bending force required to wring out the water
- ◆ While squeezing the mop, place your foot in front of the wheel to prevent the bucket from moving



*Microfiber mops require less effort to squeeze dry*

*Wide base adds stability to tall mop buckets*



*Do not bend your back when squeezing out the water*



## 14 Mopping: Wringing

## 15 Mopping: Body Movement

### Body movement



- ◆ Alternate right and left hands at the top of the mop handle
- ◆ Maintain a neutral spine
- ◆ Avoid extreme wrist motions
- ◆ Use neutral body/shoulder position
- ◆ Take the mop for a 'walk'
  - By 'walking' the mop you use far less upper body motion
  - Use your legs to generate force by stepping or shifting weight
  - Keep arms close to body stabilize the shoulders



*Keep your elbows close to your body*



*Pad the handles*

***Do not overextend your reach to the right and left***



## 15 Mopping: Body Movement

## 16 Snow Shoveling

### REMEMBER

The potential for musculoskeletal injury is high particularly among custodians working in school districts where snowfalls are small or infrequent. Use mechanized snow removal equipment whenever possible.

#### Before you begin

- ◆ Warm up your muscles for 10 minutes with light exercise or stretching
- ◆ Check with your doctor before shoveling if you have a medical condition or do not exercise regularly
- ◆ Dress in layers

#### Shovel early and often

Newly fallen snow is lighter than heavily packed or partially melted snow.

#### Pushing the snow

- ◆ Keep the shovel close to your body
- ◆ Space your hands on the shovel to increase leverage
- ◆ Shovel an inch or two off the top of the snow
- ◆ Use a shovel that feels comfortable for your height and strength

**It is better to push the snow rather than lifting it — but, if you must lift the snow, lift it properly**

#### Lifting the snow

- ◆ Squat with your legs apart, knees bent and back straight
- ◆ Lift with your legs...do not bend at the waist
- ◆ Scoop small amounts of snow into the shovel and walk to where you want to dump it

#### Pace yourself

- ◆ Take frequent breaks and replenish fluids to prevent dehydration, which affects muscle movement – shoveling snow is an aerobic activity

#### ***Do not:***

- Hold a shovelful of snow with your arms outstretched – it puts too much weight on your spine
- Remove deep snow all at once
- Throw the snow over your shoulder or to the side – this requires a twisting motion that stresses your back
- Use a shovel that is too heavy or too long



## 16 Snow Shoveling

## 17 Vacuuming: Body Movement

### REMEMBER

All vacuums present a risk to the upper body from repeated wrist and elbow movements.

#### Protect Shoulders, Wrists & Arms

- ◆ Keep elbows at or near the sides to minimize shoulder movement
- ◆ Avoid movements where the elbows are behind the body
- ◆ Adjust the location of your grip on the vacuum cleaner wand so that your hands are level with your forearm
- ◆ 'Walk' the vacuum cleaner to reduce repetitive motion

#### Vacuuming Motions

- ◆ Maintain a neutral spine while working comfortably
- ◆ Use neutral ranges in your shoulders
- ◆ Avoid extreme ranges in your wrists
- ◆ Keep arms close to your body to encourage neutral posture
- ◆ Use both hands, one to pull and one to push
- ◆ Avoid overreaching
- ◆ Stand upright and avoid bending forward
- ◆ Move the legs and not the back
- ◆ Move light furniture out of the way to make a clear path for you and the vacuum

**Change or empty the vacuum bag frequently – a full bag can add 10-20 pounds to the overall weight of the bag**



*Use the appropriate attachment*



*Use a lightweight vacuum with swivel wheels*



*Use upright stance while vacuuming*

## 17 Vacuuming: Body Movement

## 18 Vacuuming: Head Types & Backpack

### Dry Head

- ◆ Select a light brush
- ◆ Use swivel cuffs to ensure easy rotation of the vacuum head

### Wet Head

- ◆ Avoid using a wet vacuum over dry areas because it's heavier and has more 'drag' – this produces more resistance and may cause muscle fatigue
- ◆ Adjust the height of the head when doing wet pick-up to allow efficient water pick-up while minimizing 'drag'

### Power Head

- ◆ Effective over large carpeted areas
- ◆ Move wand slowly when working with power head
- ◆ Power head will assist by 'pulling' in one direction
- ◆ Power head will hinder by 'dragging' in the other direction

### Hose Length

- ◆ Avoid using the hose as a leash to drag the vacuum
- ◆ Use a long hose to eliminate the need to 'drag' the unit behind you

### Backpack Vacuums

- ◆ Provide the greatest amount of mobility
- ◆ Worn on the back with a harness
- ◆ Good for cleaning elevated surfaces like sills and doorways that are over a large area
- ◆ Good for cleaning 'portable classrooms'



*Maintain a neutral spine*

### REMEMBER

Backpack vacuums contribute to fatigue because they are worn on the back and add more strain as they get fuller.

### TIPS

- Empty the bag frequently
- Choose the right vacuum for the task
- Vary the way you use a piece of equipment

## 18 Vacuuming: Head Types & Backpack

## 19 Floor Scrubbers & Polishers

### REMEMBER

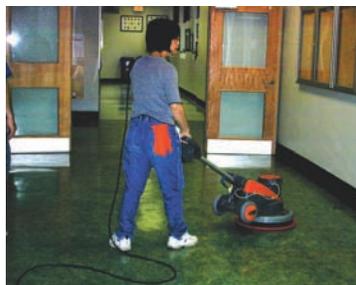
Operating floor machines requires skill and experience. Very small motions can produce sudden, extreme direction changes.

### Operating Floor Machines

- ◆ Maintain a neutral spine position
- ◆ Let the machine do the movement by moving with it as a unit
- ◆ Grip machine with neutral wrist posture
- ◆ Control direction by raising and lowering the handles
- ◆ Use a cart when transporting the machine to avoid lifting it



*Train workers in safe work procedures*



*Maintain a neutral spine position*



*Spread feet apart to maintain wide base & stability*

### Changing the Pads

1. Lock the handle in an upright position
2. Tilt the machine to place it on the floor
3. Place the pad on the floor near the machine and lower the machine onto the pad



*Ride on power scrubbers for cleaning large areas*

## 19 Floor Scrubbers & Polishers

## 20 Self-Propelled Floor Care Equipment

### Auto Scrubbers, Carpet Extractors and Vacuums

There is a wide variety of self propelled floor equipment available and extra training is required to safely operate this equipment. Safe work procedures for all of these machines are beyond the scope of this infolip. General principles of lifting and manual handling apply to filling and emptying of water canisters and vacuum canisters.



*Maintain a good sitting position*

- ◆ Maintain a neutral spine posture
- ◆ Create the movement with your legs by stabilizing your arms and 'walking' to push
- ◆ Turn the unit by walking around the corner
- ◆ Empty containers frequently
- ◆ Avoid manually lifting water reservoirs
- ◆ Use safe **filling**, **lifting (3)**, and **emptying (4)** strategies



*Maintain neutral spine & wrist postures*

## 20 Self-Propelled Floor Care Equipment

## 21 Garbage: Managing Containers & Bags

### REMEMBER

Don't assume that garbage cans weigh the same each time. Injuries can occur when lifting an unexpectedly heavy can.

#### The risks of injury are related to:

- Size of the garbage can
- Trying to predict the weight
- **Suction (23)** holding the bag in place
- Ability to replace lifting with pulling
- Controlling the weight of bag
- Method of **transporting bag to dumpster (24)**
- Mechanics of **lifting bag into dumpster (24)**

#### Container Size

The right capacity for the container is based on the size and weight of the items placed in it.

When collecting heavy articles (wet paper, books, food waste):

- ◆ Use a smaller container
- ◆ Put in a false bottom to reduce the available space

#### Controlling Bag Size

- ◆ Ensure the garbage bags are not overfilled
  - Place a false bottom (styrofoam blocks or cardboard box) in the container to "use up some of the capacity"
  - Tie off the bag when it's 1/2 (one-half) full and start a new bag on top of the first
  - Tie off the second bag when it reaches the top of the container at 1/2 (one-half) full



*Distribute the weight evenly between two bags*

#### Predicting the Weight

Often the person filling the container is not the person emptying it, so the containers may be overfilled.

- ◆ Test the load before lifting it, especially when a heavy load would be unusual

#### Times when garbage bags may be heavier than usual:

- Classroom set-up time
- Classroom clean-up time
- Special events (holidays, food days, graduation parties)

## 21 Garbage: Managing Containers & Bags

## 22 Garbage: Emptying Cans

### Emptying the Cans

- ◆ Always wear gloves
- ◆ Check the weight of the can by tilting or pushing it
- ◆ Look over the contents of the can for sharp points or protrusions
- ◆ Grasp the lip around the rim of the can; use two hands if the can is heavy and avoid bending your wrists
- ◆ Change hands to pick up and lower trash cans
- ◆ Empty trash cans frequently to avoid accumulating heavy loads

Bend your knees and keep your back straight as you pick up or lower the cans



Position the can on the barrel rim before you empty the contents and replace the lining

***Do not stoop over to line the can***



## 22 Garbage: Emptying Cans

## 23 Garbage: Pulling Bags

### REMEMBER

Repeated heavy lifting is more difficult when the contents of the bag have been pushed down to avoid extra trips to the dumpster. A strong suction is generated and extra force is needed to pull the bag out.

#### Suction Effect

Garbage bags fit tightly against the walls of the container and create a suction effect. This makes it difficult to remove the bags by increasing the force required. In order to remove the bag, air must enter the space between the bag and container.

#### To reduce the suction

- Place a loosely fitting false bottom in the container (i.e., a light piece of foam, empty box placed upside down)



*Drill holes in the sides or bottom of the container*



*Use barrels designed with lift vents*

#### Maintaining Garbage Cans

- ◆ Empty cans before they are half full
- ◆ Do not overfill or compact trash in the barrel
- ◆ Ask for help when the bag is overfilled and too heavy

#### Pulling the Bag



*Check the load & tie the bag*



*Hold bag close to body*

**Get help if the load is too heavy**

#### Tilt and Pull

Put the container on its side and use a pulling motion to get the bag out to avoid awkward lifts above your shoulders.

## 23 Garbage: Pulling Bags

## 24 Garbage: Transporting/Lifting/Dumpsters

### REMEMBER

The dumping of garbage bags requires repeated high force and high shoulder lifts to toss in bags.

<b>Common problems</b>	<b>Possible solutions</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavy lids with stiff hinges</li> <li>• Overhead push of lids for shorter workers</li> <li>• Need to hold lid open with one arm while throwing bag in with the other</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Step stool                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- for better working height to throw in bags</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Locking hinge lid                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to allow two-handed handling of bags</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### Transporting to Dumpster

- ◆ Always transport garbage bags to the dumpster with a cart
- ◆ Keep bags compact and light if no carts are available

### Lifting to Dumpster

- ◆ Always wear gloves
- ◆ Roll barrels and other equipment containing trash bags as close to the dumpster as possible
- ◆ If the bag is too heavy, get help
- ◆ Use a step up platform next to the dumpster
- ◆ Avoid twisting and tossing side ways



- ☞ With feet and body facing the dumpster, step closer and toss the bag forward into it

Place the dumpster next to the loading dock, if available ☞



### Dumpsters

Use a mechanized garbage dumpster, if available, to save time and effort and increase efficiency.



*Portable trash dumper*

*Hydraulic lift truck*

*Tilt truck/hopper dumper*

## 24 Garbage: Transporting/Lifting/Dumpsters

## ORGANIZE YOUR WORK

- ☞ Plan your workday in advance
- ☞ Set the order of the tasks you have been assigned
- ☞ Make sure the tools and equipment are in good working order
- ☞ Identify special tasks that require additional personal protective equipment (PPE), materials, and other equipment
- ☞ Coordinate with other workers to arrange for help before starting the job
- ☞ Alternate heavy and lighter tasks throughout the day, where possible
- ☞ Establish the best way to accomplish each task – if in doubt, talk to your supervisor and ask questions
- ☞ Work in teams



## WORKPLACE AWARENESS

- 🔊 Report difficulties or unusual findings to your supervisor
- 🔊 Pay attention to the task
  - Hazards are still present even though you may have been doing the work for years
- 🔊 Be aware of your surroundings and changing conditions at all times
  - Wet floors
  - Swinging doors
  - Poor lighting
  - Uneven pavement
  - Placement of furnishings
- 🔊 Remember to work safely to prevent injuries
  - Janitorial tasks are often repetitive
  - As you become accustomed to the work routine, you may overlook the hazards
  - A busy schedule, fatigue, or the past success of shortcuts may blind you to safety rules



## EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE PROGRAM

Equipment that is in safe working order allows for healthier work practices, greater productivity, and reduced risk of injury.

Unexpected or forceful actions required to operate faulty or poorly maintained equipment can lead to strain and injuries.



- ☞ Make a maintenance schedule and stick to it
- ☞ Inspect and maintain wheels/casters; keep them clean and well lubricated to make rolling easier
- ☞ Establish a reporting procedure to provide workers with a way to report broken or faulty equipment
- ☞ Make sure broken or malfunctioning equipment is tagged, removed from service, and repaired as soon as possible to maintain productivity and prevent worker injury
- ☞ Arrange for alternate equipment when machinery breaks down