



Cleaning and Custodial Services and Your Safety

KEY POINTS

- Approximately 2.3 million workers work in building custodial services occupations.¹
- Projected employment for 2031 is 2.6 million workers in custodial services.²
- Nearly 724,000 maids and cleaners work in hotels, health care facilities, and other buildings.³



Tasks

Cleaners perform tasks such as:

- Sweeping and mopping floors
- Removing trash
- Cleaning surfaces
- Moving furniture and lifting bulk material to clean
- Disinfecting tasks (health care facilities)



Cleaners perform tasks such as sweeping and mopping floors.

Risks

These tasks often result in exposure to hazards such as:

- Shiftwork
- Heavy lifting, prolonged standing, and regular bending
- Working near body fluids or other infectious agents
- Handling cleaning agents

The hazards may result in conditions such as:⁴

- Psychosocial stress
- Musculoskeletal disorders
- Infectious diseases
- Skin diseases, allergies, and respiratory diseases



The tasks cleaners perform often result in exposure to hazards.

Resources

NIOSH has resources to help cleaners and custodial employers and workers recognize, prevent, and reduce risks during their work.

Employers

[Safe and Proper Use of Disinfectants to Reduce Viral Surface Contamination in Correctional Facilities](#)

This document describes viruses that may be present in correctional facilities. It lists steps to reduce viral surface contamination through the safe and proper use of disinfectants.

[Protecting Workers Who Use Chemical Cleaners](#) |[En español](#)

This document provides information to employers about practices to help keep workers safe when working with cleaning chemicals, including green cleaning products.

[Effects of Skin Contact with Chemicals: Guidance for Occupational Health Professionals and Employers](#) |[En español](#)

This document explains how occupational health professionals and employers can identify and manage the risk of chemical exposures to the skin and prevent injury and illness associated with dermal exposure.

Workers

[Protect Yourself: Cleaning Chemicals and your Health](#) |[En español](#)

This poster contains guidelines for workers to protect their health while working with cleaning chemicals.

[Effects of Skin Contact with Chemicals: What a Worker Should Know](#) |[En español](#)

This document helps employees identify hazards and reduce the risks and health effects of chemical exposure.

[Safe and Proper Use of Disinfectants to Reduce Viral Surface Contamination in Correctional Facilities](#) ([poster](#)).

This poster, based on a [Workplace Solutions](#) document, recommends steps in plain language to reduce viral surface contamination through safe and proper use of disinfectants.

[International Chemical Safety Cards](#)

The Chemical Safety Cards offer safety and first aid information for different chemicals. They also are available in multiple languages.

Workers in healthcare facilities

[Guidelines for Environmental Infection Control in Health-Care Facilities](#)

These recommendations were developed by CDC and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee. Sections are included on cleaning and disinfecting environmental surfaces, patient care areas, and spills of blood and other body fluids.

SOURCES

CONTENT SOURCE:

[National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#)

SOURCES

- BLS [2022]. Occupational outlook handbook: janitors and building cleaners (summary). <https://www.bls.gov/ooh/building-and-grounds-cleaning/janitors-and-building-cleaners.htm>
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- Charles LE, Loomis D, Demissie Z [2009]. Occupational hazards experienced by cleaning workers and janitors: a review of the epidemiologic literature. Work 34:105-116