



Custodial Safety

From the "Custodial Training Manual" by Educational Facilities Group

Before a worker is trained to use a piece of equipment or chemical, he should be trained on safety measures. The majority of accidents are caused because of improper training and careless attitudes on the part of all toward accident causing situations. Here are a few actual accidents that commonly take place in school, with suggested ways in which they could have been prevented:

1. Custodian falls from a ladder that slipped while putting in light bulbs and receives injury to shoulder. (Ladder should be well secured with rubber feet.)
2. Phosphoric acid splashes into eye of custodian while he/she is pouring solution into container. Eye is badly burned. (Should use proper safety equipment.)
3. Custodian received puncture wound when using screwdriver to repair dishwasher. (Should use proper size screwdriver.)
4. Custodian receives back injury from moving heavy object. (Get help, training)
5. Custodian slips and falls on wet floor or object and injures arm, elbow or wrist. (Wear nonskid shoes when working in wet area. Keep spills mopped up and keep objects picked up that should not be on the floor.)

A good custodian must always be alert for health or accident hazards endangering children or adults. Hazards resulting from broken equipment or other unusual building conditions should be reported to the proper authority at once.

Some of the common hazards that may exist are listed below with suggested corrections:

Dangerous Conditions

Broken furniture
Slippery floors
Nails
Broken window

Obstructions in corridors

Moving heavy equipment
Broken glass and debris on lawn
Entries and exits blocked
Loose desks
Splintered floors, wall, desk, etc.
Bare or defective wiring

Suggested Correction

Remove it from service.
Remove cause (grease, water, etc.)
Remove or drive them in.
Remove fragments with pliers, use cardboard to cover the hole, and ask the building principal or manager to send a work order.
Remove keep hall and corridors or hallways clear. Do not leave equipment where it creates a hazard.
Use a dolly and secure assistance.
Remove.
Remove obstacle.
Tighten bolts or screws.
Remove splinters.
Turn off switch and report at once.



Oily rags or paper
Leaky gas connection
Standing on chairs

Place in fireproof containers.
Report at once.
Do not stand on furniture. Use step
ladder of proper size.

Lifting

Improper carrying and lifting cause many accidents. In custodial work we are constantly lifting, pushing, carrying. If not properly done, strained muscles will result. Following are some tips:

1. Get help for heavy loads.
2. Size up for weight and bulkiness.
3. Face load squarely with firm footing.
4. Lift slowly and evenly by straightening the legs.
5. Hold load close to the body.

Ladders

The ladder is probably the most abused piece of equipment. The blame cannot be placed on the ladder it is the user and condition of the equipment that is the real cause of accidents. Because ladders are involved in so many accidents, frequently of a serious nature, the following are safety tips concerning ladders:

1. Select the right ladder for the job to be done.
2. When on a straight ladder, never work above the fourth rung from the top.
3. Never use stepladders more than 20 feet long.
4. Never stand on top of a stepladder unless it has a guardrail.
5. Never use extension ladders beyond 60 feet.
6. Be sure that fixed ladders are attached firmly to the building.
7. Never place a ladder against a movable surface.
8. Always protect the person on a ladder.
9. Use rubber sole shoes when climbing a ladder.
10. Never carry tools in hands while going up or down ladder.
11. Never use two ladders spliced together.