



Cleaner's Health & Safety Handbook

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Introduction

The purpose of this health and safety handbook is to assist you in maintaining safe working practices whilst at work and will act as a reminder of the essential safety precautions which are necessary.

Each section details the actions necessary to ensure safety whilst working in particular situations. It is not a finite list and, in specific instances, additional safety checklists may be issued to meet particular working practices.

Remember to think about safety before accidents happen. Work safely and, if you do not understand instructions given, ask your supervisor.

You must be aware that last year (2016/17), 137 people lost their lives at work in Great Britain. In addition, around 600,000 workplace injuries occurred, and an estimated 31.2 million working days were lost due to work related illness and injury.

Your Responsibilities

As an employee you have legal duties to:

- take reasonable care for your own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what you do or do not do
- co-operate with your employer on health and safety
- correctly use work items provided by your employer, including personal protective equipment, in accordance with your training and instructions
- not interfere with or misuse anything provided for your health, safety or welfare

You can be prosecuted for working in a manner that could cause an accident!

Keys

If you are given a set of keys, please keep these with you at all times and ensure you know what each key is for and how to use it. When you lock yourself inside the premises do not leave your keys in the door as this could stop an authorised key holder gaining entry in an emergency. Keep keys with you at all times. If there are alarms, ensure you know how to set and disarm these.

In case of lost keys or if you are locked in or out of the building or have trouble with the locks contact your supervisor or manager immediately.

Emergency Preparedness

On your first shift you will be shown the fire exits and fire drill. Ensure fire exits are unlocked at the start of every shift. If you discover a fire, phone the fire brigade, do not attempt to fight it, leave the building immediately.

If you discover or believe there is an intruder on the premises, phone the police, leave the building immediately, quickly and quietly, and await their arrival. Do not worry if it is a false alarm.

In the event of a power failure 'blackout' whilst you are cleaning, stand still for a few minutes to allow your eyes to adjust to the dark, then leave the building. Do not pack up your equipment. Tell your manager what happened. If you are using electrical equipment at the time switch it off.

Make sure you know which phones you may use in an emergency. Never use these for personal calls.

If you have to use a lift at work and you get stuck in it, above all do not panic, there are always enough gaps in the door etc. to allow enough air to breathe. Normally there are emergency telephones installed in lifts. Follow the instructions and if in doubt telephone the emergency service.

First Aid and Accident Reporting

It is your responsibility to know who are the first aiders and the location of the first aid kit(s) on site

Report all accidents and dangerous occurrences, however small, immediately to your supervisor

If you witness a serious accident, get help. Whilst waiting for the medical services to arrive:

- make the person warm and comfortable
- do not move them, unless in a dangerous place

General Cleaning Safety

- Never use any equipment unless you have been trained and authorised to do so.
- Do not run over any electrical leads with the vacuum cleaner.
- Never used any electrical equipment that is damaged, i.e. cracked or broken plugs, cut or frayed cables or with individual wires showing, or if the machine itself is damaged or cracked, or if the machine retest due date has passed on the safety test label attached to the machine or extension lead. Never attempt to repair any electrical equipment yourself.
- When moving plugs from one socket to another always switch off at the socket before removing the plug, and switch on after the plug is inserted in the new socket.
- When using a buffing/scrubbing machine always start at the point furthest away from where you are plugged in and work backwards towards the plug, keeping all the cable behind you. Never train the cable over your shoulders. Always wear sturdy footwear and never wear open or peep toe shoes. Never attempt to lift a buffing / scrubbing machine on your own.
- If you have to vacuum from one floor to another always wrap the cable up first and in the case of tub vacs, remove the hose head and carry these separately, as too many loose cables and hoses could make you trip and fall.
- Never attempt to move heavy loads or furniture on your own. Never stand on furniture or fittings, such as radiators. If you cannot reach with safety by standing on the floor, leave it.
- Never mix any cleaning materials, they can sometimes produce toxic fumes. Always read the label before use. Never decant cleaning materials into unmarked containers or bottles. Only use products given to you by your manager or supervisor.
- Never take unauthorised products, people or children onto site.
- Never smoke on site, as you are possibly the last person on site, you could cause a fire.
- Always report any accidents no matter how small to your supervisor or manager.
- When cleaning stairs/landings preferably brush them down. If you have to vacuum them, place the machine at the lower level where it cannot be pulled down onto yourself.

- If you have to scrub/buff a stairway/landing always use a small machine and never put yourself in a position where you can fall down the stairs.
- Never pick out waste from a bin with your hands, always empty it directly into a large sack. Never compress waste in a sack as there could be a sharp object hidden in the waste.
- At the end of your shift remember to check taps are turned off, switch off all lights, close and lock all windows and doors as directed.
- Avoid cleaning corridors, staircases and pedestrian areas etc, during peak movement times
- Do not leave equipment around corners, near doorways, on stairs or anywhere where others could fall over them
- Put up warning notices wherever necessary, i.e. Wet floor
- Always leave obvious walkways for others when carrying out wet work such as scrubbing or mopping
- Do not block fire exits or main entrances
- Always keep cables and equipment to the side of the room or corridor
- Be sure you are in good physical condition before you commence work
- Do not take risks and short cuts as this causes accidents
- Do not work whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol
- Stack and secure all materials safely in authorised areas, never near doorways or on fire escapes routes. Do not stack too high. Take additional care with bricks, blocks, palletised materials, timber, pre-fabricated panels, pipes and tubes
- Remove waste through chutes and into skips where appropriate
- If you see any damaged equipment, do not use it, but report it immediately to your supervisor
- Respect the welfare facilities provided - and leave them tidy

Cleaning Substances

All cleaning materials provided are safe to use in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions which are printed on the label and Material Safety Data Sheets.

All employees will be provided with information, instruction and training in the use of cleaning materials. Failure to observe these instructions or the information in this handbook is a disciplinary matter.

Staff bringing in their own chemicals or placing chemicals in unmarked containers, old food containers, cups, beakers etc., face being dismissed for Gross Misconduct.

Management must maintain a register of all approved cleaning chemicals on site, details on the principal constituents, instructions for use, protective clothing to be used and action to be taken in the case of contact with skin, eyes, etc. and in the case of ingestion, absorption and inhalation.

Splashing of the eyes with any product should be followed by rinsing with cold water for 5-10 minutes and medical treatment sought immediately. Wash all skin areas that come in contact with chemicals. In the event of an accident with cleaning materials/substances it must be reported immediately to the Management.

- If you do not know what or how to use any of the cleaning materials, ask the Supervisor or your immediate Manager for advice before handling the materials
- NEVER MIX substances together
- Read the instructions carefully and ensure you understand them before commencing to use the cleaning material
- Always measure the materials and water. Always add the materials to water
- Wear protective clothing, for example, rubber gloves, when appropriate. Failure to do so may result in burning, irritation or dermatitis
- Ensure any room in which you are preparing cleaning materials, especially solvents and strong-smelling chemicals, is well ventilated
- Never place powders or other chemicals in containers not designed for them, especially in food rooms
- Always keep room, cupboards, etc. used for the bulk storage of chemicals locked.
- Chemicals must be stored away from food and out of children's reach

- Flammable chemicals should be stored out of direct sunlight in a cool store / metal cabinet as appropriate.

Hazardous Substances Warning Signage



Harmful / Irritant



Toxic



Oxidising



Flammable



Explosive



Dangerous for the Environment



Corrosive



Pressurised Gas



Health Hazard

Manual Handling

Always lift materials carefully, bend your legs not your back.

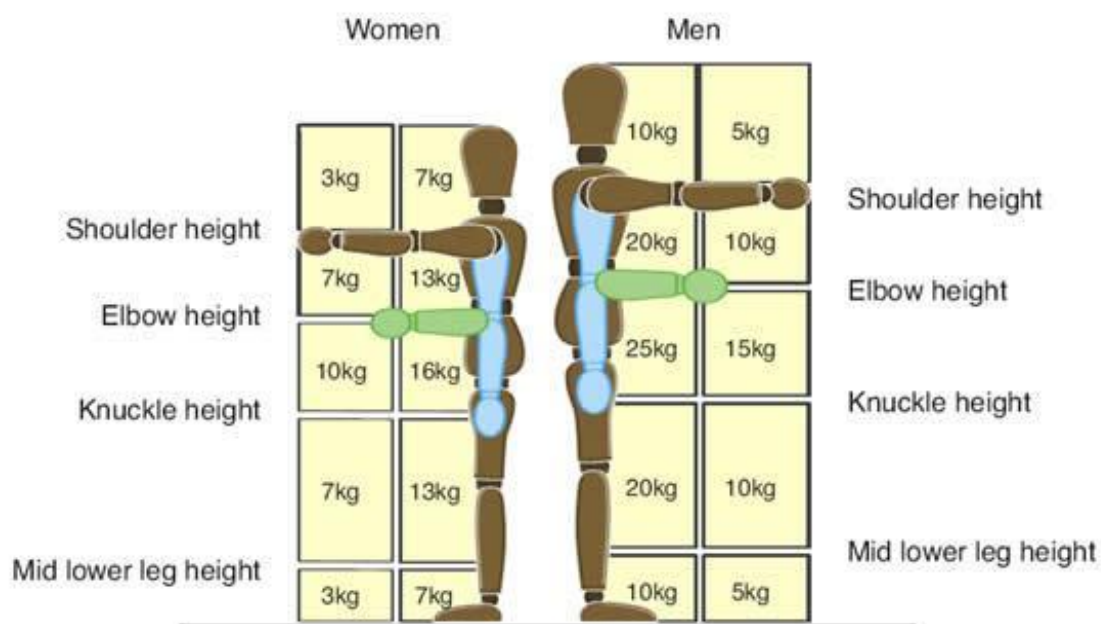
For awkward or heavy loads - get help – observe the following issues:

- know your capability - do you need help?
- plan/walk the route – check there are no obstructions in your path
- is there good lighting?
- wear protective gloves and safety shoes
- stand close to load
- place feet hips width apart
- place one foot slightly forward in direction of travel
- bend knees and straighten back when raising/lowering
- secure grip
- do not twist your spine

Use lifting equipment - avoid manual handling where possible

Be aware that around a third of all accidents are caused by incorrectly handling loads!

HSE Guidance on Safe Lifting Limits



Personal Protective Equipment

Wear suitable PPE for your work e.g. safety shoes/boots, hard hats, respirators, safety harnesses, ear defenders, safety goggles, protective gloves and other clothing as appropriate for:

- adverse weather conditions
- exposure to hazardous substances (including dust and fumes)
- exposure to lead
- use of cutting machinery
- use of heavy materials/equipment which might harm feet and/or toes
- use of hand or powered work equipment

Look after personal protective equipment and keep it in good condition

When working in dirty areas:

- apply barrier cream to skin
- remove material residues from your hair and skin as soon as possible

Observe the arrangements for cleaning, maintenance and storage of PPE on site

Common PPE Safety Signage



Eye protection must be worn



Safety helmet must be worn



Ear protection must be worn



Safety boots must be worn



Safety gloves must be worn



Safety overalls must be worn

Asbestos

Asbestos was used extensively as building material during the 1950-80s due to its high versatility. It was often mixed with other materials so it's hard to know if you're working with it or not, but if you work in a property built before the year 2000, it's likely that some parts of the building will contain asbestos.

There are three main types of asbestos:

- Blue (Crocidolite) - Banned in 1985
- Brown (Amosite) - Banned in 1985
- White (Chrysotile) - Banned in 1999

Asbestos is a naturally occurring material which breaks down into very thin fibres. They cannot be seen with the naked eye, but they can be breathed in. The fibres that are breathed in can become stuck in the lungs and damage them causing serious diseases including:

- Mesothelioma
- Lung Cancer
- Asbestosis
- Pleural Thickening

Asbestos is currently the greatest work-related cause of death from ill health! These diseases will not affect you immediately. They often take a long time to develop, but once diagnosed, it is often too late to do anything.

If you smoke, and have also been exposed to asbestos fibres, the risk of developing lung cancer is greatly increased due to a 'synergistic effect'.

In the event of discovery, or accidental damage, of a suspected asbestos containing material (ACM):

1. STOP WORK IMMEDIATELY
2. Secure the Area
3. Remove any personal contamination with damp rags
4. Notify the site management

During site induction you should ask if any ACMs are present on site and if a copy of the register/survey report is available. Even the most minor works with ACMs are under no circumstances to be undertaken without planning, training and authorisation.



Sprayed coating

Found as fire protection on structural supports (e.g. columns/beams). It is a high hazard asbestos product and can generate very high fibre levels if disturbed



Pipe Insulation

Asbestos thermal pipe lagging is a high hazard asbestos product



Asbestos insulating board (AIB) Ceiling/Door panels

AIB is a high hazard asbestos product and can generate high levels of fibres if the board is cut or drilled



AIB window panel

Like other AIB, this is a high hazard asbestos product, and if in good condition should be left undisturbed



Floor tiles

Vinyl (PVC) or thermoplastic tiles contain asbestos



Asbestos cement roof sheeting

Asbestos cement sheeting is often found on industrial building roofs and walls



Textured decorative coating (e.g. Artex)

Textured coatings contain a small amount of asbestos. The asbestos is well bonded, and fibres are not easily released. However, it is still an asbestos product, and as such, needs to be worked with safely

Ladders and Stepladders

Do not climb on make-shift arrangements - get a ladder or stepladder.

Make sure that the access equipment is fit for purpose - if not don't use it!

Before-use check:

- there are no broken rungs or splits, etc
- the foot of the ladder is on a firm level surface
- the ladder is secure at the top and/or bottom
- the top of the ladder is resting against a solid surface
- it extends at least 3 rungs above any platform
- it rests at a sensible angle, about one unit out to four units up
- there are no cables or lines which can catch when moving ladders

When carrying tools on a ladder:

- use a shoulder bag or holster attached to a belt
- hold and face the ladder and maintain a firm grip
- use a small lifting appliance, hoist or rope to move larger equipment to where it is required

Over-reaching and over-balancing on ladders and stepladders will cause accidents

Ladders are for short duration works only (e.g. maximum 15-30 minutes)

Use Class 1 or EN 131 (professional) rated ladders only

Do not carry more than 10kg up a ladder

Avoid smooth/wet floors

Retain three points of contact on the ladder/stepladder at all times

When working ensure you have two feet on one rung

Do not work from a stepladder positioned side-on

Do not place a ladder on a back slope of 6 degrees or greater or a side slope of 16 degrees or greater and ensure the rungs are levelled.



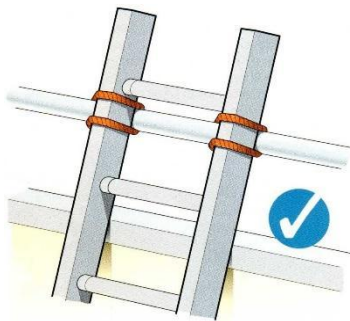
Correct 1 in 4 Angle



Incorrect - Overreaching



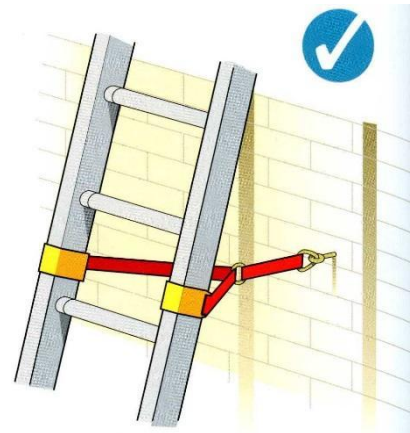
Correct Position



Tying at Top



Tying at Middle



Tying at Base



Correct - Three Clear Steps



Correct - Two Clear Rungs

Fire Extinguishers

It is your responsibility to know the location and type of extinguishers on site

When extinguishing a fire, always aim the extinguisher at the base of the flames

Remove the heat source to prevent re-ignition

There are four common types of fire extinguisher:

- **Water (H₂O) – Red Label**
For freely burning materials such as paper, wood and textiles
NOT to be used on electrical fires
- **Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) – Black Label**
For flammable liquids such as petrol and oil
Safe to use on electrical fires
- **Foam (AFFF) – Cream Label**
For freely burning materials and flammable liquids
NOT to be used on electrical fires
- **Dry Powder – Blue Label**
For freely burning materials, flammable liquids and gaseous fires
Safe to use on electrical fires

Special extinguishers will be required for use with metal fires and cooking oils

Whilst every effort should be made to control an outbreak of fire, your first responsibility should always be to raise the alarm - only then should an attempt be made to tackle the fire, and only if it does not put you at risk

Fire Triangle



Safety Signage

It is important that you understand the meaning of the colours on the signs and what they stand for.



Prohibition

Prohibition signs are always Red & White and mean:
Do Not - You Must Not - Stop



Mandatory

Mandatory signs are always Blue & White and mean:
You Must - Carry out the Action on the Sign



Warning

Warning signs are always Yellow & Black and mean:
Caution - Risk of Danger - Hazard ahead



Emergency

Emergency signs are always Green & White and mean:
First Aid - Emergency Exit - Escape Route

Noise

If shouting is necessary to be heard, the noise level is dangerously high (above 85db) and you must wear ear defenders, and take other precautions to reduce/protect yourself

- Keep compressor covers closed
- Ensure breaker mufflers are securely fitted
- See machinery panels do not rattle
- Do not keep machinery running unnecessarily

Vibration

Take care when working with powered hand-held tools, equipment or processes that can damage the hands and arms of users causing 'hand-arm vibration syndrome'

- Rotate jobs that expose users to vibration hazards to limit exposure

Health & Safety Handbook



- Ensure your hands are kept warm and dry
- Wear suitable protective clothing (e.g. gloves)

Report any tingling or numbness in the hands to your supervisor immediately.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.