



San Diego Unified School District

CUSTODIAL

SAFETY

Safety Office

2011

San Diego Unified School District

Custodial Safety

CUSTODIAL SAFETY PROCEDURES

San Diego Unified School District Custodial Staff provides the cleaning and upkeep for the buildings on campus. Custodians may encounter a variety of safety hazards. This section outlines certain guidelines and provides helpful hints that will increase job performance. At the same time, this information can greatly decrease the potential for accidents and possible injuries. This section will also point out some hazards that are not so obvious. In most cases the recommendations take only minutes to complete. A few moments of caution will avoid costly accidents. **For specific code requirements regarding safe work practices or training assistance please contact the safety office at 858-627-7174 or visit our web site: <http://www.sandi.net//Domain/144>**

Prior to assignment you should be aware of general safety procedures including the site emergency procedures. Being made aware of what to do in the event of an emergency and where to go is critical for your safety & the safety of students & staff. Each site uses a standardized emergency template however there are elements to each plan that are unique to the individual location such as signaling methods, evacuation locations, & staff assignments.

Powered & Specialized Equipment Safety

Equipment, which is necessary to get your job done correctly and efficiently, can be harmful if used improperly or with incorrect techniques. Instruction on the safe use of specialized & power equipment can be found in your custodial manual or by contacting your Custodial Services Supervisor.

Custodial Closets & Supply Rooms

1. Custodial supply rooms should have the following safety items and meet these safety guidelines:
 - Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all chemicals used in the workplace, or written instructions or map of the location within the building where the MSDS can be found.
 - Safety goggles or glasses for use when there is a risk of flying particles or hazardous liquids splashing in the eyes.
 - Rubber gloves to protect hands from cleaning products and potentially infectious substances.
 - "Wet floor" signs or the location within the building where they can be found.
 - Moving equipment such as dollies & carts.
 - Hearing protection if needed.
 - Ladder(s).

2. Custodial closets must meet the safety guidelines below:
 - All chemicals must be stored at eye level or below & protected from falling during seismic activity.
 - All containers must be properly labeled.
 - Wet mops must be hung up to dry.
 - Mop buckets must be empty - no standing water or chemicals.
 - Food cannot be stored near chemicals.
 - Equipment cords cannot be frayed or have exposed bare wires.

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Safe Lifting Tips

Custodial work entails lots of lifting whether it be small classroom waste bins or large pieces of furniture. Improper lifting is the cause of many custodial injuries which decrease the quality of life for staff. Pre-lift planning is important. Know the weight of the object being lifted, the route you plan on taking, and ensure the route is clear.

- Always stand close to the load with your feet flat.
- Bend with the knees – not your back and get a good grip on the object.
- Pull your stomach muscles in while lifting with your legs, not your back.
- Lift straight up and do not twist at the waist.
- When carrying a load hold it close to the body so you can see over it, avoid twisting the back, and face the way you will be moving the item.
- Get help with heavy or awkward loads.
- Use carts and hand trucks when possible.
- For heavy boxed items you may want to remove items from the box and move them in several smaller loads.

Wet Mop and Mop Bucket with Wringer

A wet area can be a potentially hazardous situation. The hazard can be greatly reduced by exercising simple precautions and proper work methods. Slipping is a major cause of knee and back injuries.

- Wear shoes with non-slip soles when working on wet floors.
- Protect others from slipping by marking the area to be mopped with appropriate "Wet Area" warning signs before beginning work.
- Have a rubber, non-slip handgrip on the bucket wringer handle. This makes it easier to wring the mop and reduces the risk of injuries to hands, wrists, or backs caused by a hand slipping off the handle.
- Leave the mop bucket in a place where it can be seen. Don't leave it in a hidden or potentially dangerous place (e.g., behind furniture or doors, around corners, or at the top or bottom of stairs).
- When rinsing a mop in the mop bucket, avoid splashing dirty water or chemical solutions on clothes, hands, or in eyes. Goggles, safety glasses with side shields, or full-face masks May be needed.
- Mopping puts excess stress on the back, especially if done improperly. To avoid this type of stress, use a lightweight mop, if possible, and hold the handle in such a way that the back is fairly straight and free from strain. Take an extra step to avoid overreaching.

Push Broom or Dust Mop

Generally treat push brooms and dust mops with the same care as wet mops. The following added precautions should be noted:

- Know the properties of and proper application of any dust mop treatment products.
- The use of sweeping compound greatly reduces the possibility of airborne nuisance dust when dry sweeping.
- Use care when sweeping around floor mounted protrusions such as door stops.

Cleaning up Broken Glass or Sharp Objects

- Wear gloves to pick up the large pieces first.
- Use hand tools such as fox tails and dust pans to get smaller pieces in a pile for disposal.
- Put material in a puncture-proof container for disposal, not in a trash liner.

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Trash Disposal

Dumping trash cans poses a potential hazard when improper techniques are used and is a common source of injury for custodians. Using safe lifting techniques, limiting the size & weight of loads, making multiple small trips rather than one large load can help you avoid injury. When possible use task rotation so you are not performing the same task and/or types of body movements continuously over an extended period of time.

- Do not reach into a trash container to get something out. Empty the whole liner into the trash cart. Glass or other potentially harmful materials disposed of improperly can cause lacerations.
- Be careful at all times climbing steps or loading docks to access trash bins or working around the bin.
- Dumpster lids can be very heavy & awkward, get assistance opening lids if needed.
- Secure the door latch on the trash bin when finished.
- Report any dumpsters in need of repair to your supervisor.
- If anything is found in the trash that may not be safe to dispose of in the bin, do not empty the trash!!!
- If you see anything suspicious or hazardous in the trash bins, report it immediately to your supervisor.
- Many back injuries sustained by custodial staff are due to improper lifting during trash removal. Large trash bags are not to be stuffed until completely full. Limit bag contents to no more than 35 gallons (half-full on a 70 gallon bag). The cost of numerous trash bags is much less than the price of a back injury.

Use of Ladders

Ladders are very useful tools. By their nature, they are not very dangerous, but when used improperly they can cause death or major injury. In fact, ladders cause an estimated 300 deaths and 130,000 injuries requiring emergency medical attention every year.

Some of the most common hazards involving ladders are instability, electrical shocks, and falling. With a bit of thought and some knowledge, these accidents can be predicted and prevented.

Most likely you don't use your ladder every day, or even every month. For this reason, it is important that you inspect the ladder for flaws before you climb up. Be sure to check that all rungs are secure. Look for loose nails, screws, hinges or bolts. If you are using a wooden ladder, be sure that no part is warped or splintered. Manufacturer's labels & duty ratings must be clearly legible. Lastly, check to be sure that the feet are even and that the ladder does not wobble. If defects or damage is noted the ladder must be taken out of service, labeled "Dangerous Do Not Use" and repaired (if feasible), or replaced.

Ladder selection

- It is important that you always use a ladder that is appropriate in size and construction for the task at hand. For example, if you are going to be handling anything with an electric current, you should never use a metal ladder.
- You also need to be sure that your ladder can tolerate your weight as well as the weight of any tools or equipment you are carrying. Pay attention to the different classes and choose the ladder that suits your needs.
 - Type 1AA Industrial – Special duty – 375 lbs
 - Type 1A Industrial – Extra heavy duty – 300 lbs
 - Type I Industrial – Heavy duty to 250 lbs
 - Type II Commercial – Medium-duty to 225 lbs
 - Type III Household – Light duty to 200 lbs

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Tips for safe ladder use

- Be sure the ladder is long or tall enough to safely reach the work area.
- Ensure the load rating can support the weight of the user, materials and tools.
- Use ladders with non-conductive side rails when used near energized equipment.
- Never use a broken ladder
- Wear slip-resistant footwear.
- Keep areas at the top and bottom of the ladder clear.
- If applicable, wear approved fall protection devices.
- Don't put a ladder's base too close to the structure it is leaned against; the base should be spaced 1 foot away for every 4 feet it reaches up
- Never carry large objects while climbing or descending the ladder.
- When using extension ladders, make sure that all locks are firmly secured
- Never use a wet ladder, as you may slip while climbing
- Keep both hands free when climbing.
- Face the ladder and maintain three-point contact at all times.
- Do not load a ladder beyond its maximum intended load.
- Use the ladder only for the purpose for which it was designed.
- Most ladders are meant to support one person.
- Do not try to reach so far that you lose your balance; instead, simply move the ladder
- Never stand on the ladder's top three rungs

○ **Non-self-supporting straight or extension ladders:**

- Use them only on stable and level surfaces.
- Ensure that the upper section rests on the lower section and is properly engaged
- The upper section must always overlap on the climbing side of the ladder
- Extend side rails at least three feet above the upper landing being accessed.
- Height-to-base ratio should be four feet to one foot.
- Another person should hold the ladder while a worker is ascending or descending.
- Ladders should be set so that rails maintain equal contact with the supporting structure.
- Use adjustable feet to level the ladder,
- Never lean more than 12 inches beyond either side rail.
- Carry small tools and other work materials on clothing or tool belt.
- Never climb beyond the third-highest rung.

○ **Self-supporting step or "A" frame ladders:**

- Use only on a solid, level surface.
- Never use a folded step ladder as a straight ladder.
- Fully extend and lock the spreaders.
- Never climb or stand on leg braces, the top step or the service tray.
- Avoid using unprotected step ladders in doorways or high-traffic areas. If it is necessary, lock or barricade doors, mark off the area or have a co-worker act as a monitor.
- Carry small tools and work materials in clothing or a tool belt.
- Maintain three-point contact at all times.

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Cleaning Solutions

The cleaning solutions used in custodial work contain chemicals that can be harmful if splashed in eyes, on skin, or inhaled. When various chemicals are left out carelessly or improperly sealed they pose a threat to students & staff. Chemicals should be stored at or below eye level for ease of access and identification. Protection from seismic activity should also be a consideration for storing potentially hazardous materials, attaching a simple lip at the front edge or stringing wire across the open end of shelving.

The following information is very important for your safety and the safety of others. This information should not be used as a substitute for Hazard Communication Training & Material Safety Data Sheet Training.

- Know the nature of the chemicals being used. If you have any questions, talk to your supervisor or refer to the **Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)**. If chemicals should get splashed in your eyes or on your skin, it is important to know what to do to neutralize the chemical and prevent further harm.
- Read and know what the warnings on chemical containers stand for and follow the precautions associated with each warning.
- Wear protective gear when working with chemicals, (consult the product MSDS for appropriate PPE).
- Store all chemicals in an approved, clearly labeled, properly sealed container at or below eye level.
- Do not dispose of a chemical unless you know the procedure required to properly dispose of it and its container.
- If a chemical is found in the area and the contents are uncertain, leave it alone. If it has spilled or is unsealed, do not clean it up, do not put a lid on it, and do not touch it until it has been accurately identified. Limit access to the area and notify your supervisor or the Safety Office. After hours emergencies should be reported to School Police Services

Confined Space Information For Custodial Staff

All SDUSD employees are **prohibited** from entering any confined space unless they have permission from their supervisor and have been properly trained in accordance with Cal/OSHA regulations.

DEFINITION OF A CONFINED SPACE

A space large enough and so configured that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned work and has limited means for entry and exit and is not intended for continuous worker occupancy.

DO NOT enter any area that you think might be a confined space without first checking with your supervisor.

Typical Confined Spaces at SDUSD Facilities:

- Storm Drains
- Manholes
- Pits
- Mechanical rooms with limited entry/exit
- Utility vaults
- Underground tunnels and/or piping systems

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Lock out/Tagout Information For Custodial Staff

Lock Out/Tag Out is a safety procedure to prevent accidents. Isolation of energy (electrical, liquid, air and steam) is necessary to safely perform work tasks on equipment. Lock Out/Tag Out is a defensive program for each individual that performs maintenance on equipment. Lock Out/Tag Out procedures should be used when equipment must be un-jammed, cleaned, adjusted, maintained, or repaired

Locks & Tags are never to be removed by someone other than the person who placed them on the equipment. The lock is also never to be bypassed, ignored, or otherwise defeated.

DEFINITIONS

Lock out: The placement of a lock on an energy-isolating device. This act prevents workers from operating a piece of equipment until the lock is removed.

Tag out: The placement of a DANGER, DO NOT ENERGIZE, DO NOT OPEN, DO NOT CLOSE, or CAUTION tag on an energy-isolating device. A tag out device is a prominent warning device of a lock out. It is used primarily to warn and to caution other workers that no one is working on the specific equipment, but a hazardous condition exists. Prior to working on a piece of equipment to which a tag is attached, the employee should also lock and tag out the piece of equipment.

Energy-Isolating Device: A mechanical device that prevents the transmission or release of energy. Examples include the following:

- Manually operated circuit breakers,
- Disconnect switches,
- Line or block valves.