

# Keeping Janitors Safe

Janitors have higher rates of injuries and compensable claim\* costs compared to other service workers.

Control your claim costs by reducing common workplace hazards.

## Slips, trips and falls:

- **Limit cleaning floors** with liquids to the last jobs of the shift, or other method to ensure janitors don't have to walk over wet surfaces.
- **Allow janitors** to have at least one hand free, and ensure they can see where they are stepping when carrying objects up and down stairs.
- **Minimize carrying objects** up and down stairs by providing equipment on each floor, and elevator access when large garbage or other material must be moved between floors.
- **Provide** required ladder safety training (**WAC 296-876-150**):
  - ♦ **Train** employees to recognize ladder hazards including: safe ladder construction, use, placement, and maximum load capacity.
  - ♦ **Retrain** employees periodically

## Repetitive arm movements:

- Invest in machines, where possible, that will reduce the need for repetitive arm movements (e.g., floor sweepers).

## Heavy lifting:

- Use the online lifting calculator to determine safe lifting weights.  
<https://osha.oregon.gov/OSHAPubs/apps/liftcalc/lift-calculator.html>
- Use smaller containers to transport garbage
- Use a ramp or other means to allow janitors to safely toss garbage from chest height or below.

Janitors often have **limited English** language speaking and reading fluency.

Ensure safety training and all instructions are provided to them in their primary language.

- Use signs with pictures and universal caution graphics.
- Utilize safety training and posters available from L&I in languages other than English.

\*Compensable claims are those that result in more than 3 lost workdays, or where the worker was kept on salary, or had total permanent disability.

## Janitor's Claim Data\*

Total costs (2003-2012)

**\$76,524,291**

Median cost per claim

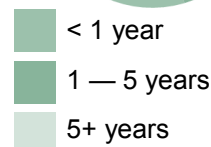
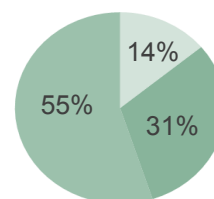
**\$6,863**

Median days away from work

**47**

A majority of injured janitors are **new workers** (less than a year on the job).

## Tenure at injury date



## Top injury types:

- **Sprains and Strains 31%**
- **Falls from same level 15%**
- **Struck by/Against 12%**
- **Falls from elevation 10%**

**53.7%**  
of injured  
janitors are  
women



**31.7%** of janitors prefer a language other than English for communication with L&I

- español
- русский
- 中文繁體
- 한국어