

Janitorial Workload Newsletter



Janitorial Workload Study Updates

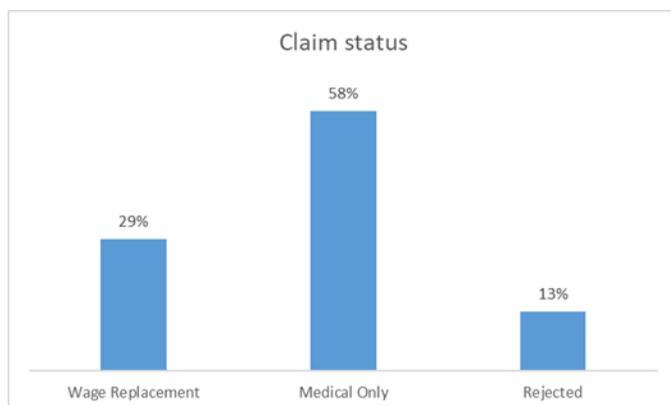
Fall/Winter 2023

Research Staff News

One of our project leaders, Caroline Smith, has moved on from the janitors' study and is leading the new [Work Equity Research Center \(WERC\)](#) here in SHARP at the Department of Labor & Industries. WERC aims to work with communities to co-create research projects and develop solutions to improve work-related outcomes for historically and currently underserved workers. Thank you for all your hard work, Caroline, we're excited to see what WERC does! [Naomi Anderson](#) is now leading the Janitorial Workload Study.

Research Activity Updates

- The workload calculator tool has been developed and is in a testing phase – please contact us if you are a community partner (employer, safety & health professional, or labor representative) who would like to test the calculator and give us feedback. We are working on getting the calculator onto the web for easier access – but that is a process that will take some time. We will keep you notified of our progress. We are also hoping to expand the calculator through additional on-site data collection, please contact us if you would like to get involved.
- We regularly review janitors' workers' compensation claims to select a few for interviews on how they were injured, so that we can learn about job hazards and better understand how to prevent these injuries. From July 1st, 2019, when we began this part of the janitorial workload study, through September 30th, 2023 - there have been 3,100 claims in the janitorial services industry (as defined by L&I risk classes¹). Thank you to everyone who has shared their story!



¹ This includes workers in Risk Class: 6602-03 Janitorial cleaning services, N.O.C.; and 6602-05 Janitors, N.O.C.

- Janitors who filed claims during this time period were mostly women (57%), and were between 25-44 years old (45%) when they established their claim.
- Of the 906 claims that were serious enough to progress to wage replacement, the most common injury types² were: work-related musculoskeletal disorders (26%), falls (22%), and 'other' (24%).
- Of the 1,786 medical-only claims, the most common injury types were: 'other' (34%), struck by or caught in/against injuries (24%), and falls (14%).
- Many of the common activities we see in claims include: lifting or moving trash bags/cans/bins; slip, trip and fall injuries – on stairs, on wet floors, over furniture/equipment; and motor vehicle incidents on the way to/from work sites.
- While not one of the most common injuries, one type of injury that we do see regularly is needlesticks – these often happen when janitors are handling trash/trash bags. Most (68%) needlestick injuries involved a finger.
 - See our latest tip sheet for ideas on how to look out for these hidden hazards.
 - Thankfully, while they can be scary injuries, for the 102 claims involving needlesticks during this time period, none resulted in disease transmission.
 - If you get a needlestick injury at work – seek medical care immediately and tell them it occurred at work; you and your doctor can fill out a workers' compensation claim; and tell your employer.

² Injury types are broad categories that include many individual codes grouped for analysis; 'other' includes many injury types that were not coded elsewhere; for more information on the groupings used, [please contact us](#). Claims are coded using the Occupational Injury and Illness Classification (OIICS) codes, v.1.01 (2007).