

# Cleaners' Safety Newsletter



Fall 2024

## Calculator Progress:

We are happy to announce that the workload calculator and the user guide are now available for download [on our website](#). Feel free to share the link! If you have been using the Workload Calculator – please [send us](#) any thoughts or comments on the tool and how we can make it easier to use.

## System Requirements:

The Janitors Workload Calculator was developed using MS Excel. The program exists in beta (pilot testing) form, and as such, we cannot fully support or anticipate user technology issues. The current release works best on Microsoft Windows devices and does not support Mac devices or mobile use. We are currently working to develop a web version of the calculator.

## Training:

While the program and user guide are available for download, if you need additional assistance in using the calculator or to be walked through the program and guide – please [contact us](#). We may be able to offer virtual or in-person training.

## Hazard Spotlight: Vacuum Safety

A common task for janitors and other cleaning professionals is using the vacuum – whether upright or backpack. Vacuums can be heavy and hard to use safely, especially in crowded areas or when moving between floors. If you know how these injuries happen, it can help you can take steps to work safely.

*Most common body parts involved in vacuum injuries:*



Since July 1, 2019, there have been 208 claims filed that involve vacuum cleaners. Thirty percent (30%) of these were classified as work-related musculoskeletal disorders and twenty-five percent (25%) involved overexertion (from lifting, pulling, or pushing, for example). Twenty-one percent (21%) involved some kind of fall – (on the same level or down stairs/steps). Janitors also reported being burned and shocked by vacuum cleaners. While the most common body parts<sup>1</sup> involved in vacuum injuries were the back and the lower extremities (legs and feet), there were claims for injuries all over the body.

Be aware of the area you're working in – especially when vacuuming on or around stairs, and when moving around furniture or objects. Identify where there are cords or other trip and fall hazards. Check the condition of the equipment, and report frayed electrical cords or poorly maintained equipment to your supervisor. Take breaks or rotate tasks as needed to rest your muscles and body.

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<sup>1</sup> Claim coding of injury characteristics for workers' compensation injuries differs between State Fund (SF) and Self-Insured (SI) claims, this analysis used both systems and grouped similar codes. Thirty-four percent (34%) of these claims did not have enough information to classify.