

# Cleaners' Safety Tip Sheet

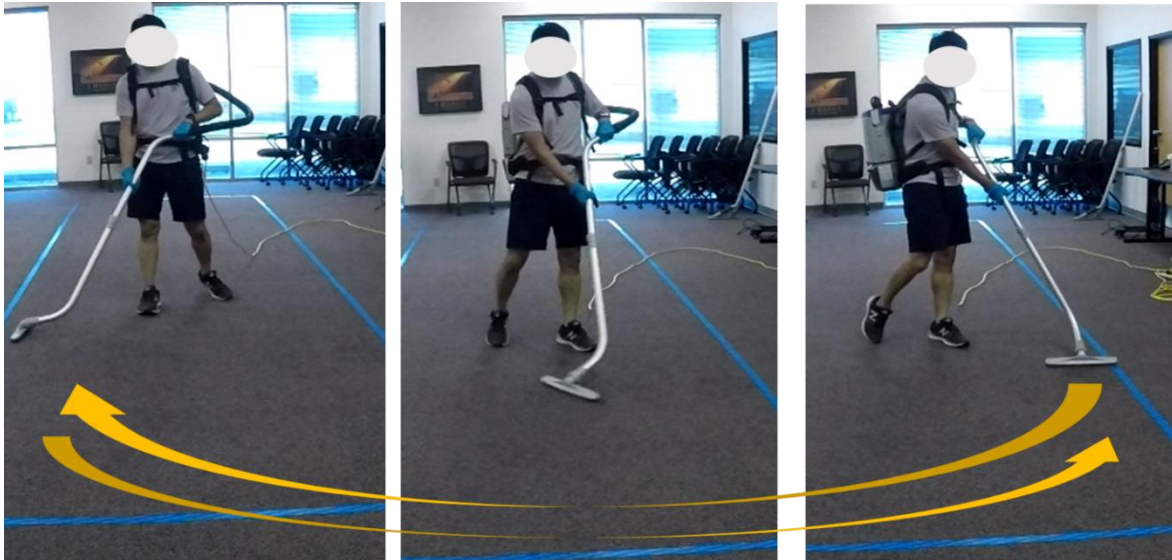
A series of health and safety tips to prevent work-related injuries in the cleaning industry



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## Safer vacuuming

Many janitors and cleaners report getting work-related back injuries, often from using vacuums. Injuries commonly occurred when: lifting or carrying the vacuum, putting on or taking off backpack vacuums, doing the same movements for many hours (repetitive motion), or from trip and fall injuries over hoses and cords or down stairs/steps.



### For employees:

- Clear the area as best you can before vacuuming – identify where there may be areas or items that could cause a trip or fall
  - Use extra caution when vacuuming stairs
- Avoid carrying a backpack vacuum machine too high on your back
- Side-to-side sweeping motions are easier on your shoulder muscles than using a front-to-back stroke
- Always wear the backpack vacuum using both shoulder straps
- Try to put on the backpack onto both shoulders at the same time. If possible, have a coworker help you, or place the vacuum on a table or surface to support the weight

### For employers:

- Provide: training on best practices for safe cleaning, and well-maintained equipment that can be adjusted to fit your employees
- Employees must be allowed rest breaks ([RCW 49.12](#))