

# Cleaners' Safety Tip Sheet

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



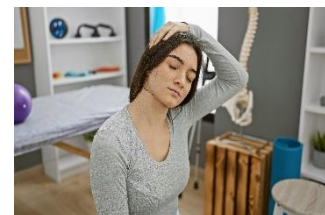
Spring 2025

## Managing Work Stress for Janitors

It can be hard to manage stress at work, but trying small things can help you feel better. You deserve to work in a healthy and happy place! Here are some easy ways to feel less stressed at work and at home.

### Stretching

Since janitorial work involves a high physical load, gently stretch your arms, neck and legs to help your muscles feel better before and after your shift.



### Breathe to Feel Better

Stop and take a big, deep breath, hold it for a second, and then let it out slowly. This helps you stay calm when things are hard at work or anywhere.

### Healthy Habits

To feel your best, it's important to take care of your body. Drink lots of water and eat healthy meals to keep your energy up. Getting enough sleep is also very important, so try to go to bed at the same time every night. If you ever feel like you want to stop smoking, drinking, or using other things that aren't good for you, there are helpful people and resources who can support you when you're ready: [How to quit tobacco](#), [Alcohol use treatment](#), [Opioid use treatment](#), and [Substance use treatment](#).



### Mindfulness

Take a few deep breaths before you start a task. Pay attention to how your body moves while you work, and notice what's around you without judging it. This can help you feel calm and focused during your day.

### Time Management

To avoid feeling tired most of the time, prioritize tasks using a simple checklist, and take regular short breaks and/or rotate tasks if you can.

### Writing

Keep a journal for a week or two to write down what makes you feel stressed. Write about the things that happen, the people around you, and where you are. Also, note how you feel in your body and your emotions. Looking at your notes can help you understand your stress and find ways to feel better.



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## Building Workplace Support and Networks

Taking small steps to make friends and get help at work can really reduce stress. Here are some ways to build good relationships, ask for help when you need it, and talk openly with others to make work a better place:



### **Join or start a support groups at work**

You can talk to other janitors who understand your job and the challenges you face.

### **Participate in wellness programs**

Some jobs offer programs to help with stress. They might have activities to stay healthy, learn about mental health, or get support. If you can, join these programs to feel better and meet helpful people.

### **Ask for help from an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**

If your job has an EAP, it's a good place to get free, private help. They have people who can talk to you about how you feel and help you with work problems.

### **Speak up for a safer and more respectful work environment**

If someone is being unfair or treating you badly, write it down and talk to a supervisor or HR. Many places also have ways to report unfair treatment without saying your name.

### **Ask for proper training and safety equipment**

Make sure you know how to clean safely and use equipment the right way. Ask for safety gear like gloves or goggles to keep you safe. When you feel safe at work, it can help you feel less stressed.

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## Where to Get Help - Community and External Resources

If you're feeling overwhelmed, support may be available in your preferred language.

**Washington 211:** is a comprehensive resource database connecting residents to health and human services across the state. By dialing 211 or visiting their website, you can find mental health services, pro bono lawyers, assistance with housing, food, healthcare, and even health promotion activities including yoga/exercise resources. This service is confidential and available

24/7. Services are offered in over 140 languages including Spanish, Hindi, Korean, Vietnamese, and Russian. More information: <https://wa211.org/>

**Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS):** provides a range of services, including mental health support, housing assistance, and vocational rehabilitation. Janitors experiencing stress or seeking additional support can explore the resources offered by DSHS. Services are offered in Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Lao, Korean, Khmer, Somali and Chinese. More information: <https://www.dshs.wa.gov/>

**Crisis Connections:** offers a Community Resources Online database, providing up-to-date information on health and human services available in King County and Washington State. Janitors can search for services related to mental health, financial assistance, and more. Services are offered in Spanish and other languages through translation services provided by Language Line Solutions. More information: <https://www.crisisconnections.org/>

**The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI):** provides resources and support for individuals dealing with mental health challenges. They offer confidential helplines and can connect janitors to local support groups and services. Services are offered in Spanish and Tagalog. More information: <https://namiwa.org/>

**WA Dept. of Labor & Industries (L&I) – Behavioral Health Services:** if you have been injured or made ill at work and filed a claim – L&I provides some behavioral health interventions available (claimants only, limited circumstances) to help them recover from injuries and return to work. These interventions address psychosocial barriers hindering recovery. If you file a claim, you may be eligible for behavioral health services under certain circumstances, though you may need medical approvals. Services are offered in Spanish, Chinese, Russian, Arabic, and Vietnamese (and other languages by translation and interpretation services). More information: <https://www.lni.wa.gov/patient-care/treating-patients/by-specialty/behavioral-health>

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We want to hear from you! Soon, there will be opportunities to join conversations where you can share your experiences and ideas.

Stay tuned, your voice matters!