OPF - General Safety for Janitorial Staff

1. Inspect all equipment before and after use for damage, loose nuts, bolts, frayed or loose wiring, missing ground pin on the plug, and for oil or grease leaks. Keep equipment tightened up. If a bolt or nut keeps working loose, there is damage to the equipment or to the electric cord or plug, notify your Supervisor immediately to have the equipment repaired. Do not attempt repairs yourself.

2. Know where the SDS book is kept in your area and how to read an SDS. Conduct an annual chemical inventory each year. Handle all chemicals with rubber gloves, face, and eye protection.

3. Do not use any chemical before you have been trained on the proper use of that chemical and have read the SDS for that chemical.

4. Do not put caustic chemicals in spray bottles. If in doubt ask your Supervisor.

5. Be sure that all containers of chemicals (including spray bottles) are properly labeled.

6. Wear the proper PPE for the task at hand.

7. Use eye protection when cleaning over your head.

8. When using ladders refer to the section on ladder safety.

9. Lift properly using your legs, not your back. Get help to lift heavy objects.

10. Be careful when carrying mops or brooms so that no one is injured by the handles. Be especially careful in areas with low ceilings that ceiling tiles or sprinkler heads are not damaged.

11. Stairway work is hazardous. Remember that mop buckets and mop handles can become tripping hazards.

12. Place wet floor signs to warn of slippery conditions.

13. Disconnect fans and other electrical equipment before cleaning.

14. Do not attempt to remove an electrical plug if your hands are wet.

15. Do not block stairways or doors with electric cords or other pieces of equipment that could cause tripping hazards.
16. When using an extractor or a wet/dry vacuum to clean up a large amount of water, be sure that a GFCI is in place.

17. Be sure that all switches on electrical equipment are in the OFF position and the ground pin is in place before plugging them into any outlet.

18. Buffers - Do not operate buffers unless you have been trained to do so.
   a. Always adjust the handle properly before starting the buffer.
   b. Do not operate the buffer with one hand.
   c. Keep the cord behind you and up away from your feet.
   d. Use a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) plug when buffing with liquids of any kind. If you do not have one available ask your Supervisor to provide one.
   e. When using a buffer to clean carpets be sure that the bonnet is adjusted properly. If the buffer starts to chatter or jump, stop immediately and readjust the bonnet. Do not attempt to buffer throw rugs or mats.
   f. Two or three people are required when moving buffers to different floors in buildings where there is no elevator. Do not attempt this alone. See your supervisor for the proper method of moving buffers.

19. Unplug all machines and electrical equipment at the wall outlet before leaving the work area (by grasping the plug, not pulling on the cord). Do not attempt to disconnect the plug by yanking on the cord.

20. Keep closets and work areas clean and uncluttered.

21. Keep oil dust mop heads covered with plastic bags when not in use. Place oily rags in metal containers or dispose of them properly.

22. Custodians may come across Bloodborne Pathogens. Always exercise Universal Precautions and know the location of your Exposure Control Plan. NOTE: Workers are not to clean these areas until after they have had the Bloodborne Pathogens Training.

23. Report all accidents to your Supervisor immediately.
Custodial Problems and Solutions:

The Problem: Repetitive or sustained awkward postures, such as mopping surfaces by bending, positioning the elbow away from body, over-extending during push and pull movements and the figure-eight method, excessive wrist bending and twisting.

Notice bent over posture and elbow near shoulder level and away from body.

The Solution: Move closer to the area to be mopped rather than reaching. Mop in small sections to avoid extended reaching. Step or shift your legs to avoid twisting the upper body. Keep arms and elbows in positions that are neutral.

Avoid bending wrists while mopping and do not grip the handle with a lot of force.

Notice body in more upright position, wrists in neutral position and elbows close to the body.

The Solution: Use mechanical means to clean large areas to avoid repetitive motion injuries. Make sure you are properly trained to use the machinery.
The Problem: Repetitive or sustained force, such as lifting heavy buckets of water, either once filled or to empty the bucket.

Notice: Higher water level = greater chance of bodily injury

The Solution: Use water taps in a low position on the wall for filling buckets; use a hose to fill buckets if the water taps are above ground level, use mop buckets with wheels or on a trolley, or use lightweight mop buckets. Half-fill buckets with water to avoid possible back injuries, and fill buckets close to where they will be used. Use a cup or other device to reduce the water level before dumping high levels of waste water. Ask for assistance if needed.

Notice: Lower water level = reduced chance of bodily injury (provided safe lifting techniques applied)
The Problem: Repetitive or sustained force, such as using force with one hand when wiping, scrubbing and cleaning mirrors, tiles or glass walls.

The Solution: Use chemicals that are safe and require less effort to use. Use materials that require less effort to use, for example, specially treated cotton cloths for cleaning bathroom glass, or microfiber sponges and cloths. Use equipment suited to the size of the surface areas being cleaned, for example, handled sponges with larger heads for cleaning large areas.

Keep your wrists straight and in a neutral position as much as possible. Switch hands every so often to avoid repetitive strain injuries.

Stretch before taking on repetitive tasks.
The Problem: Repetitive or sustained awkward postures, such as cleaning surfaces or objects above shoulder height by reaching upwards.

The Solution: To avoid reaching, use equipment with a long handle or extendable pole, so you do not have to reach above shoulder height while cleaning mirrors and high tiles or walls.
**The Problem:** Repetitive or sustained force, such as cleaning the surface of toilets or urinals by using force with one hand while in an awkward posture.

**The Solution:** Eliminate or reduce repetitive and sustained force by using chemicals that are safe and require less effort to remove stains, long-handled tools with suitable brushes that require less effort to use (Unger toilet brush).

Bend at the knees or kneel on a pad to reduce the chance of back strain. Keep the body upright and in a neutral position. Keep the wrist straight and alternate hands to reduce the chance of repetitive strain injuries.