

ERGONOMICS: CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Preventive Measures and Controls

Mopping and Sweeping Floors

- Move your feet from side to side. This will help avoid extreme reaches to your left or right and reduce upper body strain.
- Alternate the use of your right and left arm to avoid fatigue. Take frequent, short breaks to help reduce fatigue.
- Bend your knees and keep your back straight while using the mop ringer. This will help keep your spine in the neutral position.
- Avoid lifting heavy mop buckets full of water and pouring them into the sink. Use a hose to drain water or use a floor drain in a custodial closet.

Vacuuming

- Alternate the use of your right and left arm to avoid fatigue when vacuuming for long periods of time.
- Wear anti-vibration gloves or use a vacuum with a padded handle to help cut down on vibration.
- Stand upright while vacuuming to help keep your spine in a neutral posture and help avoid lower back pain.
- Carry the vacuum by the handle or at the center to balance the weight.

Cleaning Restrooms and Other Services

- Bend at the knees and not at the waist to help decrease the stress on your back.
- Make sure that the handles of the tools that you will need are long enough to reach most areas. This will help reduce the stress on your back and knees.
- Alternate the use of your right and left hands to avoid fatigue.
- Wear knee pads or a knee rest if you must be on your knees for any length.

Moving Carts with Cleaning Supplies

- Use carts whenever feasible or carry only small quantities and weights of supplies at one time.
- Keep your most-used items closest to you to help avoid long reaches and subsequent strain on the musculoskeletal system.
- Carts should be pushed and not pulled.
- Use well maintained carts with large, low-rolling, low-resistance wheels for easier maneuvering to help decrease the force needed to move the cart.
- Handles on carts should be at waist height and positioned to allow for neutral postures. Some carts have adjustable handles and may be appropriate when carts are shared between workers.

Trash Removal

- Keep your back straight and bend at the knees, not at the waist, while removing trash bags.
- Making more frequent trips with less weight can help lessen the load on your musculoskeletal system.
- Alternate the use of your right and left hands to remove the trash to help prevent fatigue.
- Ask for assistance or use a mechanical aid such as a dolly or cart to remove a heavy trash bag.
- Keep the load to the safe lifting zone above your knees, but below your shoulders.