



for custodians

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THE ART OF MOPPING

As a custodian, you often perform floor-mopping tasks. This task can aggravate muscles and fatigue the body. There are guidelines you can practice to minimize your risk of injury. Below are some scenarios and risk control measures to help you perform your tasks as safely as possible.

SCENARIO

Clearing the area to be mopped:

- Custodian lifts and moves furniture such as tables and chairs that are heavy, unbalanced, or difficult to grasp.

Wet mopping floor area:

- The custodian's arm grasping the top of a mop handle is held with the elbow away from the body, resulting in an awkward shoulder posture. This may be because the mop is too high for the custodian for the custodian or because of poor work technique.
- Custodian applies excessive force during push/pull action while mopping.
- Custodian forcefully grips the mop handle.
- Custodian bends wrists.
- Custodian squats or kneels on the hard floor to reach underneath items.
- Custodian keeps head bent down and forward in a static (stationary) posture while looking down.
- Custodian bends forward with the mop.
- Custodian twists when mopping.

Wringing out the mop:

- Custodian experiences contact stress in the palm of the hand from pressing down on the wringer handle. The wrist may also bend backwards.
- Custodian bends at waist and leans forward.

Emptying mop bucket:

- Custodian lifts the mop bucket up off the floor to empty the water into a drain.

RISK CONTROL MEASURES

Use mechanical assistance like dollies, hand trucks, etc. Have a second person help lift and carry furniture.

Ensure the mop handle is not higher than your eye level.

Keep your arm close to your body while mopping.

Consider using smaller, lighter mop tops and lighter plastic or aluminum mop handles instead of wood. Wring excess water out of mop tops before use.

Enlarge the mop handle with padding such as firm foam, plastic or tape. Alternate left and right hands at the top of the handle.

Maintain a loose grip on the mop handle to avoid excessive wrist bending.

Use kneepads or foam to help kneel safely and avoid awkward stooping postures and contact stress on knees.

Take short breaks from constantly looking down.

Move your feet to get closer to the area being mopped. Ensure mop height is not below shoulder level when mopping.

Swing mop in a horizontal figure 8 motion. Try not to mop too large an area in one motion. Move your feet side-to-side as you mop.

Consider a wringer with a longer handle, which requires less force to squeeze water out of mop tops. Pad the wringer handle or install a plastic grip handle.

Bend at your knees, and keep your back straight as you push mop wringer down.

With bent knees, lift bucket keeping it close to your body. Keep your back straight and do not twist. Rest the bucket on the edge of the sink while dumping water.