HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE CLEANING SERVICES INDUSTRY

Cleaning Services Workers Training Guide

Interfaith Worker Justice
Cincinnati Interfaith Workers’ Center
Houston Interfaith Worker Justice Center
Arise Chicago Workers’ Center

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH AND SAFETY
Health and Safety in the Workplace

Why is workplace health and safety important?

- An average of 15 workers die each day in the United States from workplace injuries or illnesses.

- Over 5,600 people die each year in the United States from workplace injuries or illnesses.

- Over 4 million non-fatal injuries were reported in 2009.

- These figures only include those injuries and illnesses which were reported by employers. They do not include incidents that were not reported.

- OSHA, which we will discuss later, requires employers to provide employees with a safe and healthy workplace.

Workplace Health and Safety

Why is this topic important for Hispanic or Latino workers?

FIGURE 1. Number* and rate† of work-related injury deaths of Hispanic workers compared with rate for all workers — United States, 1992–2006

* Data from 2001 exclude fatalities resulting from the September 11 terrorist attacks.† Per 100,000 civilian workers aged ≥16 years.

Chart explanation: In the United States, the proportion of Hispanic or Latino workers that die in the workplace is higher than that of other workers. Although the rate of work-related deaths has decreased generally over the years, it has not decreased among Hispanic or Latino workers.

Source: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5722a1.htm
COSTS OF WORKPLACE INJURIES AND ILLNESSES

Not all injuries and illnesses result in death.

*What types of consequences can non-fatal injuries and illnesses have for workers?*

For workers some of the **direct costs** of an injury or illness are:

- the pain and suffering of the injury or illness;
- the loss of income;
- the possible loss of a job;
- inability to provide for one’s family;
- health care costs.

Indirect costs include effects on workers’ families and community.

Source: ILO Introduction to Occupational Health and Safety

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT?

- Know the risks.
- Know our rights.
- Know how to defend our rights.
- Work with better practices.
- Organize so that our employer will create better conditions.
Additional Workplace Violations:

**Wage theft:**

- Many cleaning services workers are also victims of wage theft. Wage theft occurs when the employer fails to pay a worker for the hours they have worked. This includes not paying overtime when workers work over 40 hours in a week and taking illegal deductions from workers’ pay.

**Sexual harassment:**

- Sexual harassment is also common against female immigrant workers. Undocumented women are frequently victims of harassment by coworkers or supervisors. Many are afraid to speak out because of their legal status.

**Work speed:**

- Workers are constantly pressured to work faster and faster each day. Because of this pressure from management, workers are forced to work to cut corners and work carelessly, causing injuries.
CHAPTER 2
MAPPING AND CONTROLLING WORKPLACE HAZARDS
Chapter 2 Instructor Overview

This chapter will provide students with the basic tools for recognizing workplace hazards and methods by which those hazards can be controlled.
Ask students to think of the following questions:

- What hazards exist in your workplace?
- Are there working conditions that you suspect may be hazards but are not sure?
- What is the most dangerous task that you were ever asked to perform?
- Have you almost been seriously injured or killed? How?
- What is the most dangerous thing you ever saw another worker do?
- Have you ever been on a job where a worker was seriously injured? What was the hazard?

Their answers will guide the next activity.

Distribute the fact sheets on the following pages to students, or, alternatively, highlight the information in the following pages with emphasis on hazards relevant to the cleaning services industry in Chapter 3.
HAZARD MAPPING

Students will work in their small groups to create maps of different types of workplaces. They can use butcher paper and markers. To begin, students should draw a floor plan of a workplace in the industry where they work. The plan should show rooms, work areas, equipment, windows and doors. The maps can be very basic.

When they are finished, each group will decide where the hazards are located in their workplaces. Using the topics covered in this section and/or the fact sheets on the following pages as a reference, students should mark those places on the floor plan with their markers. Use the following codes:

- **Red** for safety and physical hazards
- **Blue** for chemical and biological hazards.
- **Green** for additional hazards.

You may use other color codes or symbols depending on the needs on your class. You may also, for example, use different colors each for safety hazards, physical hazards, chemical hazards, and biological hazards. **Keep in mind that the most important goal of this exercise is for students to identify the hazards in their workplace and not get hung up on which category it fits into or the fine points of whether it’s a dust, mist, or vapor.**

If a student is not sure whether something is a hazard, they should mark it as a hazard and discuss it with the group.

Students should take 15 minutes to prepare the maps, and then present them to the group.

The final map can look like the map on the following page.
FACT SHEET #1
SAFETY HAZARDS

Safety hazards are those which cause injury to the worker.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF HAZARDS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Hazards- Any situation where a person can slip or trip and fall from four feet or more. (Six feet for construction workers.)</td>
<td>Ladders, scaffolds without guardrails, open stairways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falls to Same Level- Conditions that cause a person to slip, trip, fall, or hurt themselves.</td>
<td>Cluttered workspaces, slippery surfaces, wet or greasy floors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falling Objects- Workers are at risk of falling objects when work is being done above them or when materials are not stacked properly.</td>
<td>Working underneath cranes or scaffolds, object placed on a shelf that is too high.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity- Electrocution can occur when a person comes into contact with an electric current.</td>
<td>Electric equipment, electrical wires, lightning, batteries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharp Objects- Sharp objects can cause cuts or even amputations.</td>
<td>Knife, saw, meat cutter, box cutter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machine Hazards – Machine parts, both fast moving and slow parts, can cause accidents such as crushing or amputating parts of the body.</td>
<td>Motor parts, drills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moving Objects- A person can be struck, run over or crushed by heavy machinery.</td>
<td>Tractors, trucks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Hazards- Fire hazards are conditions that increase the risk of a fire occurring in the workplace.</td>
<td>Bad wiring, improper use of stoves, failure to have fire safety equipment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Physical hazards can cause illnesses when they transfer energy from the object to the person.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Noise</strong></td>
<td>Loud noises can cause hearing damage, either immediately or gradually over time.</td>
<td>Machinery, motors, explosions, loud music.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heat</strong></td>
<td>A hot surface or overexposure to the sun or heat can cause burning or dehydration.</td>
<td>Working outside during summer, ovens, fryers, grills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cold</strong></td>
<td>Exposure to cold or being trapped in a cold place can cause frostbite, hypothermia, and even death.</td>
<td>Working outside during winter, refrigerators, freezers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Miscellaneous</strong></td>
<td>Any other physical object that can cause injury or illness.</td>
<td>Radiation, ill-fitting protective equipment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Work Safe, Work Smart, Minnesota Department of Health Curriculum.
FACT SHEET #3
HEALTH HAZARDS – CHEMICAL HAZARDS

Chemicals can enter the body in the following ways:
  o Inhalation (breathing)
  o Ingestion (swallowing)
  o Absorption (through the skin)
  o Through cuts or openings in the skin

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF HAZARDS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Solids</strong>- Chemicals in solid form.</td>
<td>Dry paint. (For example, dry paint can contain lead.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dusts</strong>- Dusts are small particles of solids. You can be exposed to materials that are already in dust form, or through work processes that create these dusts.</td>
<td>Cement bags, fiberglass, asbestos.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Liquids</strong>- These are chemicals that are found in liquid form at room temperature.</td>
<td>Pesticides, paints, cleaning products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vapors</strong>- Vapors are gases that have evaporated. Certain vapors can cause eye and skin irritation. Some can even cause brain damage over time.</td>
<td>Pesticides, paints, cleaning products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gases</strong>- Some chemicals exist as gases at room temperature. Other solid or liquid chemicals convert to gases when they are heated.</td>
<td>Aerosols, carbon monoxide, vehicle fumes, hydrogen sulfide.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FACT SHEET #4
HEALTH HAZARDS – BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Biological hazards are living things that can cause injury or illness to human beings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF HAZARDS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Animals</strong></td>
<td>Many injuries and illnesses can be caused by contact with animals or their waste.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Allergies, manure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Insects and rodents</strong></td>
<td>Certain animals may appear in filthy workplaces. They can bite and spread disease.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roaches, rats, mice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sick People</strong></td>
<td>Illnesses can be transmitted from one person to another, though contact with a sick person or that person’s fluids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Examples of fluids include saliva, blood, waste. Example of illnesses include the cold and the flu.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Needles and syringes</strong></td>
<td>A variety of illnesses can be transmitted through shared or contaminated needles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AIDS, Hepatitis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plants</strong></td>
<td>Many illnesses can be caused by contact with plants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pollen, mold, poison ivy.</td>
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</table>

## FACT SHEET #5
### ADDITIONAL HAZARDS

Additional hazards are those which cannot be classified into the other categories but can cause health or safety problems for workers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPES OF HAZARDS</th>
<th>EXAMPLES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Violence</strong> - Violence in the workplace is violence which is directed to employees or employers. Recall that homicides are one of the leading causes of workplace deaths.</td>
<td>Using weapons against coworkers, fights at work, employee abuse, robbery at work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stress</strong> - This occurs when the demands of the job are greater than the capacity or resources of the worker.</td>
<td>Angry clients, not enough time to complete a task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Repetitive Motions</strong> - Work that requires the same motion over and over can cause pain or injuries over time. This can occur even if the motions are not difficult.</td>
<td>Assembly lines, poultry and meat cutting, computer keyboards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heavy Lifting</strong> - Objects that are too heavy or carried incorrectly can cause back problems or problems in other parts of the body. Back problems are the most common workplace injury.</td>
<td>Boxes, people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Confined Spaces</strong> - Spaces with few openings and inadequate ventilation can cause harm due to lack of oxygen and inhalation of toxic gases.</td>
<td>Underground pipes, granaries.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CONTROLLING WORKPLACE HAZARDS

Employers should maintain conditions and adopt practices that protect workers.

HAZARD CONTROL MEASURES

HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most effective (best)</th>
<th>Least effective (worst)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▲</td>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td>Elimination</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>of hazard</td>
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<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td>Substitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>***</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**</td>
<td>Labor Practices/ Administrative Controls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Training and Procedures)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*</td>
<td>Personal Protective Equipment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: UFCW, A Safety Committee Guide for the Workplace; National Labor College Health and Safety Curriculum
Elimination

- The best way to control a hazard is to **eliminate** it entirely. It is best to do this as early as possible. An example of elimination would be to use an electric forklift truck rather than a gas operated forklift truck to eliminate carbon monoxide in a warehouse. Another example would be to use a chain from the floor to open an elevated valve rather than using a ladder to climb up and open the valve.

Substitution

- When a hazard cannot be **eliminated** completely, the second best alternative is **substituting** the dangerous condition. The idea is to substitute chemicals, equipment, or hazardous materials with ones that are less hazardous. An example of this would be using paint that does not contain lead-based pigments. A potential problem is when the product being used as a substitute is as dangerous as the original. For this reason, it is important to find out if the product is truly less hazardous than the original.

Engineering controls

- **Engineering controls** are another way that technology can be used to change the work environment, a machine, or some equipment in order to reduce the hazard. For example, machine guards, backup alarms, guardrails, covers, slip resistant surfaces, and using machines to move heavy objects instead of carrying them.

Photo Source: [http://actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/osh/ergo/ergoa.htm](http://actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/osh/ergo/ergoa.htm)
Administrative controls

- **Administrative Controls or changing labor practices** means changing the way and the structure of how work is done. Example: Instead of one employee exposed to a particular hazard for eight hours a day, the employer could assign four workers to work for two hours each. This could be used for repetitive tasks or for any exposure to a chemical hazard.

Personal Protective Equipment

- **Personal protective equipment (PPE)** can include respirators, and protective wear for the eyes, ears, and face, gloves, and protective rope. PPE is the least efficient way to protect workers because it does not get rid of the hazardous situation. If equipment fails, workers are still exposed to the risk.

*What is the purpose of the PPE in the picture below?*

![Diagram of PPE](http://www.safework.sa.gov.au/contentPages/EducationAndTraining/TrainingKits/WHSTrainingResourceKity/whsKity/top5_10.htm)
**ACTIVITY 2-2**
**Applying Workplace Hazard Controls**

Ask the students to use the hazard maps that they developed in the previous exercise and to work with their same groups to choose one hazard from their maps that they believe is important.

The students should then take 5-10 minutes to prepare a short skit where they as workers approach their employer to discuss ways that the employer can control the workplace hazard. Students should incorporate at least one of the hazard control methods listed in this chapter.

Depending on the needs and size of the classroom, some students can act as employers and others as employees, or the instructors and facilitators can act as employers. If possible, each student should have a speaking role.
REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

1. What is the best way to control a workplace hazard? What is the next best? What is the least reliable means of hazard control?

2. Name two forms of PPE for your industry.
   
   a. 
   
   b. 

   What is the danger of only using PPE as a way to control a workplace hazard?
REVIEW AND DISCUSSION – POSSIBLE ANSWERS

1. Elimination. Substitution. PPE.

2. Answers can include gloves, helmets, knee pads, respirators, goggles, etc. The danger of only using PPE is that it does not get rid of the hazardous situation.
CHAPTER 3

HAZARDS IN THE CLEANING SERVICES INDUSTRY
Chapter 3 Instructor Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an introduction to hazards specific to the cleaning services industry and ways in which workers can adopt basic safety techniques that can help to prevent accidents. The hazards covered in this section are the following:

- Slip, Trip and Fall Hazards.
- Falling Objects
- Chemical Hazards
- Bed Bugs and exposure to bed bug eradication methods

Instructors should focus on the hazards that most affect their student population.
SLIP, TRIP AND FALL HAZARDS

Slip, trip and fall hazards are one of the leading causes of workplace injuries and even death. Here are a few ways to reduce these hazards in your workplace:

- Wear comfortable, slip-resistant shoes.
- Mop floors when few people are around and make sure to use wet floor signs.
- Sometimes dry mopping can be better than wet mopping. For example, when cleaning up a small spill, it is better to use a paper towel to dry that small area than to mop the entire floor with a wet mop and create a slip and fall hazard.
- Use a step-stool, not chairs which can be unstable, in order to reach high spots. If you need to reach areas that require a ladder, make sure to learn proper ladder safety.
- When using a pushcart or carrying a large load, make sure you are able to see past your load when walking and approach blind spots with caution.
- Keep walkways clear and clean up garbage, paper, and other debris.

FALLING OBJECTS

Another frequent cause of workplace injury is being struck by falling or flying objects. Here are a few ways to reduce these hazards in your workplace:

- Stack materials to prevent falling; don’t stack heavy objects high. Store regularly used items waist level.
- Use a stepstool to be able to see what you are grabbing.
- Use caution when coming around doors.
CHEMICAL HAZARDS
In the cleaning services industry, you may find yourself working with chemicals that may be hazardous or have long-term health effects.

Personal Protective Equipment. When exposed to hazardous chemicals, dusts, or gases, it is important to have the correct equipment to protect yourself from the chemicals that you are using. Personal protective equipment can include gloves, safety goggles, and masks. OSHA requires your employer to provide you with this equipment.

- Many cleaning products that you use at work contain bleach, ammonia or other chemicals that can have harmful health effects. These cleaning products may release gases or fumes that can cause workers to feel ill. It is important to follow instructions when handling these chemicals and, as mentioned above, to use the proper protective equipment.
- OSHA's [Hazard Communication Standard](#), which we will discuss in Chapter 5, gives you the right to know what chemicals you are using in your workplace. Your employer has to provide you with [training](#) on how to properly use the chemical, and have available [Material Safety Data Sheets](#) (MSDS), which list all of the information and hazards related to that Chemical.

- When using chemicals such as ammonia, make sure to follow all listed instructions. Ammonia is a strong, colorless gas. If the gas is dissolved in water, it is called liquid ammonia. Poisoning may occur if you swallow or touch products that contain large amounts of ammonia. Breathing ammonia may also cause workers to feel ill.

![Ammonia Bottle](#)

![Ammonia Hazard Symbol](#)

- Use well-ventilated areas. Mix chemical concentrations outdoors, and while cleaning bathrooms turn on the vent, don’t do all bathroom cleaning at once

- After using or being exposed to any cleaning product, make sure to wash your hands and take off any equipment that you were using while cleaning. If you are working with bodily fluids, dispose of them in separate marked bags, and throw out gloves after handling body waste. Always protect yourself and make sure others do too.

The following page contains a list of cleaning chemicals that you may encounter in your workplace.
### COMMON HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS USED FOR CLEANING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCTS</th>
<th>CHEMICALS</th>
<th>SHORT TERM HEALTH EFFECT</th>
<th>LONG TERM HEALTH EFFECT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Laundry detergents</td>
<td>Alkylphenol ethoxylates</td>
<td>• Respiratory tract irritation</td>
<td>• May cause hormone disruption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General purpose cleaners</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Swelling and irritation of the skin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Glass cleaners</td>
<td>Butoxyethanol</td>
<td>• Nose, throat, and eye irritation</td>
<td>• May cause liver cancer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General purpose cleaners</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Headache and dizziness</td>
<td>• May cause damage to kidneys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Carpet spot remover</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Vomiting and stomach pain</td>
<td>• May cause damage to a developing fetus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Toilet Cleaners</td>
<td>Hydrochloric and Phosphoric Acids</td>
<td>• Skin and eye irritation and burning</td>
<td>• Bronchitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Glass cleaners</td>
<td>Isopropyl alcohol</td>
<td>• Throat irritation and coughing</td>
<td>• Dermatitis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Carpet shampoo</td>
<td>Nitrilotriacetic Acid</td>
<td>• Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea</td>
<td>• Damage to respiratory tract</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Oven cleaners</td>
<td>Sodium Hydroxide</td>
<td>• Skin and eye irritation and burning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Heavy duty degreasers</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Throat irritation and coughing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Degreaser</td>
<td>Trisodium phosphate</td>
<td>• Kidney damage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• General purpose cleaners</td>
<td></td>
<td>• May cause kidney cancer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Laundry detergent</td>
<td></td>
<td>• May cause cancer of the urinary tract</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Bed bug eradication at work and its effect on safety and health of workers

Violation of OSHA/OHS Laws: OSHA/OHS laws don’t mention bed bugs, but they require employers to ensure proper housekeeping and sanitary conditions. They also impose a general duty on employers to protect workers against reasonably foreseeable risks.

However, when using chemicals (insecticides) to kill bed bugs in home health care facilities, offices, hotels and homes look first at warnings on the Material Safety Data Sheets. The person or employer who buys the chemicals to control and kill bud bugs is responsible for providing this information to employees. Identify the chemical, and always use safety glasses & rubber gloves when applying anything toxic like an insecticide. If a worker feels he or she has been affected by the inhalation of a chemical call immediately the public emergency telephone number: 1-800-664-9042 or National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) at 1-800-858-7378.

Health Hazards associated with chemicals on controlling bud bugs include (ACUTE and CHRONIC): Liquid sprays can be irritating to eyes and skin. Inhalation of high concentration may cause CNS depression. Liquid is toxic and will be harmful if swallowed.

- SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE: Irritation as noted above. Early CNS depression may be evidenced by headache, dizziness and nausea. In extreme case, death may occur.

- MEDICAL CONDITIONS AGGRAVATED BY EXPOSURE: Eye, skin and respiratory disorders. FIRST AID PROCEDURES: EYES: Flush with plenty of water. SKIN: Flush with water and remove contaminated clothing and shoes. INHALATION: Fresh air and oxygen if required.

- INGESTION: Do NOT induce vomiting. Get medical attention.

- Keep liquid and vapor away from heat, sparks and flame. Handling equipment must be grounded to prevent sparking.

- When employers are forcing workers to use toxic chemicals to eliminate bed bugs, there is an opportunity to organize workers to investigate and present non toxic alternatives that are mostly free from safety hazards to the employer.
CHAPTER 4

ERGONOMICS FOR CLEANING SERVICES WORKERS
Body Mapping

- Hand out a sheet with a diagram of a human body, from the front and from the back (such as the diagram on the previous page) to each student. Have a large version of the same diagram on the chalkboard or flipchart at the front of the classroom.

- Ask the students to mark with an “X” the parts of the body that they believe are being affected by their work. After they are done, have them come up to the front to mark the diagram at the front of the classroom. The final diagram can look something like the picture below.

- Explain to the students that they can speak with you individually if they do not want to share their injury or illness with the group.

- Ask students to explain why they put their marks on the body.

- Point out the injuries and illnesses that are common among workers in certain industries.

- Have the class participate in a discussion about this, with questions such as why they think these injuries occur, what can they do to reduce the chance of injury, etc.

Example of Body Map.
**WHAT IS ERGONOMICS?**

Ergonomics is the science of designing the job to fit the needs of the worker, instead of having the worker fit the needs of the job.

For many workers, ergonomics may not be high on their list of priorities, but injuries caused by badly designed work conditions can lead to serious injuries over time. These injuries can occur in the hands, wrists, joints, the back, or other parts of the body. These injuries are called musculoskeletal disorders.

For employers, setting up a well-designed workplace can be expensive in the beginning because they may need to spend money on equipment or training. However, injuries from poor working conditions can end up costing the employer more money in the end. Employers lose money when workers miss days of work due to pain or injury, and it is expensive for employers to have to hire and train new workers when other workers leave due to injury or illness.

Some examples of work conditions that can lead to injury are:

- tools and tasks that require you to twist your hand or joints, such as the work many mechanics perform
- applying too much pressure on parts of the hand, back, wrists or joints
- working with the arms outstretched or over the head
- working with a bent back
- lifting or pushing heavy loads.

Source: [http://actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/osh/ergo/ergoa.htm](http://actrav.itcilo.org/actrav-english/telearn/osh/ergo/ergoa.htm)
BEST AND PREFERRED WORK ZONES

Work is safest when lifting and reaching is performed in these zones. Working outside these work zones may increase the risk of injury. It is particularly important to perform heavy lifting tasks within the best work zone.
SHELVES

Storage.

- Keep heavy and frequently-used items in the “Best” or “Preferred” Zone between your waist and shoulders. Arrange storage areas in this manner to minimize excessive lifting, carrying, or awkward postures. This reduces the stress on the body caused by bending or reaching overhead.

Low Shelves and Drawers.

- Use knee pads to reduce knee injuries when cleaning items in low drawers or shelves for long periods of time. This reduces the stress on the knees and legs when kneeling.

- Use a kneeler or stool when working at low shelves for long periods of time. This reduces stress on the knees and legs when squatting and kneeling.

High Shelves.

- Use a step stool to reach items on high shelves.
- Use long-handled mops and dusters for areas that are hard to reach.
**LIFTING AND CARRYING**

- Use a cart to move heavy items from one place to another. This can help you move heavy loads and keeps your supplies near you.

- Keep cart wheels well maintained. Wheels that are in poor repair can be difficult to push. Racks or carts with bad wheels should be removed from service until they can be repaired.

- Where possible, use boxes with handles.

- Don’t be afraid or embarrassed to ask a coworker for help.

- Avoid bending and reaching to get closer to your work. Use stepstools and long-handed equipment.

- Avoid repetitive motions. Alternate tasks that use different muscle groups.

- Take time to stretch during breaks.
SAFE LIFTING TECHNIQUES

1. Get close to the object

2. Bend at your hips and knees. Gloves may improve your grip.

3. Lift smoothly and slowly, keeping the object close to your body. Keep the load between your knees and shoulders.

4. If you need to turn, pivot with your feet instead of twisting your back.

Source: http://www2.worksafebc.com/PDFs/SafetyBulletins/StartSafe/kitchen/rc_tip5.pdf

Photo Source: http://www.revolutionhealth.com/conditions/bones-joints-muscles/back-pain/prevention/proper-lifting
Chapter 5 Instructor Overview

This information contained in this chapter will provide students with an introduction to OSHA, their basic rights under the Act, and their employers’ responsibilities to provide them with a healthy and safe workplace.
WHAT IS OSHA?

- OSHA is the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, a federal agency of the United States government and part of the Department of Labor.

- This agency is responsible for workplace health and safety in the United States. OSHA’s mission is to prevent accidents and protect the health of workers.

OSHA’s functions include—

- Developing rules on workplace health and safety and enforcing these rules through workplace inspections.

- Tracking workplace accidents.

- Giving trainings on workplace health and safety.

Some states, including Arizona and California, have their own OSHA plans through their states. These programs must have regulations that are as protective as those of the federal government.

ALL WORKERS HAVE THE SAME RIGHTS UNDER OSHA REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS!!

Source:
YOUR RIGHTS UNDER OSHA CAN BE CATEGORIZED AS

5 BASIC RIGHTS

1. Right to a healthy and safe workplace.

2. Right to receive information.

3. Right to receive training.

4. Right to request that a dangerous situation be changed, to file complaints, and to participate in the process.

5. Right to be protected against retaliation.

REMEMBER THAT THESE RIGHTS EXIST REGARDLESS OF YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS!

Have you seen the OSHA poster on the following page at your worksite?
Job Safety and Health
It's the law!

EMPLOYEES:
• You have the right to notify your employer or OSHA about workplace hazards. You may ask OSHA to keep your name confidential.
• You have the right to request an OSHA inspection if you believe that there are unsafe and unhealthful conditions in your workplace. You or your representative may participate in that inspection.
• You can file a complaint with OSHA within 30 days of retaliation or discrimination by your employer for making safety and health complaints or for exercising your rights under the OSH Act.
• You have the right to see OSHA citations issued to your employer. Your employer must post the citations at or near the place of the alleged violations.
• Your employer must correct workplace hazards by the date indicated on the citation and must certify that these hazards have been reduced or eliminated.
• You have the right to copies of your medical records and records of your exposures to toxic and harmful substances or conditions.
• Your employer must post this notice in your workplace.
• You must comply with all occupational safety and health standards issued under the OSH Act that apply to your own actions and conduct on the job.

EMPLOYERS:
• You must furnish your employees a place of employment free from recognized hazards.
• You must comply with the occupational safety and health standards issued under the OSH Act.

This free poster available from OSHA – The Best Resource for Safety and Health
WHAT ARE YOUR EMPLOYER’S RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER OSHA?

1. Provide a workplace that is free of known hazards and comply with OSHA regulations.

2. Provide training as required by OSHA.
   Many OSHA standards require your employer to train workers on certain health and safety topics issues in their workplaces. Other OSHA standards require that employers limit certain tasks to workers who are qualified or certified, meaning that they have already received training.

3. Keep records of injuries and illnesses.
   Employers with 11 or more employees are required to keep records of workplace injuries and illnesses.

4. Provide medical exams when required by OSHA regulations and provide workers Access to medical and exposure records.

5. Not discriminate against workers who assert their rights under the OSH act.

6. Post OSHA citations and inform workers what they have done to fix the problem.

7. Provide and pay for personal protective equipment (PPE.)
CHEMICAL HAZARDS COMMUNICATIONS

OSHA requires your employer to provide you with written information about hazardous chemicals in your workplace. This is called OSHA’s hazard communication standard. Under the standard, your employer is required to do these things:

**MSDS.** Your employer is required to keep Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) related to each of the chemicals used in your workplace. The MSDS gives information about the hazards associated with the chemicals and ways for you to protect yourself from harm while using them. You have the right to request to read the MSDS of the chemical you must handle. *(Note: Material Safety Data Sheets are not required to be in languages other than English.)*

**Labeling.** Your employer must label containers of hazardous substances with the chemical name of the material and hazard warnings. *(Note: Labels are not required to be in languages other than English.)*

**Hazard Communications Program.** Employers must have a written hazard communication program, which must include a list of all hazardous materials at the worksite and an explanation of how the employer will comply with OSHA’s standard.

**Training.** Workers who are exposed to dangerous chemicals are required to be trained in a language they understand. This training should include the names and locations of hazardous chemicals at the worksite, the procedures that the employer has developed to protect workers from the chemicals, ways to measure hazardous chemicals at the worksite, as well as information about MSDS and where they are located, container labeling, OSHA’s standards, and the employer’s hazard communications program.
Filing an OSHA Complaint

Ways to File

- You can download the form from OSHA’s website (www.osha.gov), fill it out, sign it, and mail or fax it in. These types of complaint are the ones that are most likely to result in an OSHA inspection of your workplace.

- You can file a complaint online. However, most online complaints are resolved informally over the phone.

- You can call or visit your local OSHA office. They can give you a complaint form if you wish to fill it out then or file it at a later time.

- You can call or visit your local worker centers. The worker center can be authorized to act as your representative in the complaint process.

When you file your complaint, you can request OSHA not to reveal your name. OSHA will conduct an inspection without telling the employer who filed the complaint.
Food for Thought:

OSHA has over 1000 federal inspectors and 1400 state inspectors.

BUT...

There are over 8 MILLION workplaces in the United States!

What does this mean for workers?

This will lead us into our next chapter on negotiations.
CHAPTER 6
NEGOTIATING FOR BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS
Chapter 6 Instructor Overview

The purpose of this section is to identify the challenges of negotiating with employers, walk through steps to prepare for a conversation with an employer, and to practice a few scenarios of negotiations.

Remind participants that OSHA has limited resources and can’t be everywhere. Therefore, it is important for them to be able to negotiate with their employers for better working conditions. It is not necessary to have a union or formal health and safety committee in order to negotiate improvements. Sometimes, two workers are enough if they discuss the hazards and prepare a plan in advance.

There are two handouts that go along with this exercise and can be found at the conclusion of the exercise explanation. These are Handout #1 “Values” and the handout entitled “Steps, Planning, and Tips for Better Negotiations.”

1. **Present a mini socio-drama** to illustrate the need to negotiate and introduce the topic. The facilitators/organizers should plan out the scene ahead of time with two actors, ensuring that the issues brought up in the dialogue are relevant to workshop participants. This skit can be exaggerated and funny. Props are really helpful.

   a. Example content:

      i. Cleaning workers: one day at work, your employer comes up to you and says, “We need you to start using this new cleaning spray. It’s very powerful and will save you time cleaning the bathrooms (of this hotel, of the school, in our clients’ houses). Isn’t that great! And since you’ll save time, we will expect you to clean each bathroom in half the time you normally have been.” Turns to leave, and then adds, “Oh, and please carry this new spray bottle with all the other supplies in your bucket. I know it feels a little heavy, but you’ll get used to it. Okay? Okay! Great!”. Turns to leave. Then the worker hesitates … and ends up just saying ok.
2. **Brainstorm** with the participants asking:

   a. What did you see in the skit? Do you and other workers face such challenges on the job?

   b. Why is it important to communicate and negotiate with your employer?

      i. Responses might include: *to clarify expectations, to understand what risks I will be exposed to and minimize those risks by talking through the issues, set your own boundaries, understand the employer’s self interest*

   c. Why is it difficult to negotiate?

      i. Responses might include: *I am afraid to lose my job, I think I know already what the employer will say, none of my co-workers will say anything to back me up, the solution will cost money and I know my employer won’t want to pay for it*

3. **Discuss the values** required to even start negotiating and pass out Handout #1 or simply write the three values listed below on a flipchart. Draw off of the comments given from the previous questions (#2 above) to connect these values in. After each value statement is read, ask the question: why do you think this is important?

   a. **Values handout** content: In order to negotiate, it’s necessary to hold these values:

      i. **As a human being, woman or man, as a worker, I have value.**
         
         *Commentary: we have to first begin by valuing ourselves. If we are going to advocate for improved safety and health protections, then we must place high importance on our own well-being. God only gives us one body!*
ii. **I don’t always have to keep my mouth shut.** Commentary: Many times we think to ourselves that in order to keep our jobs or maintain the favor of our employers, we have to accept their conditions and requests without objection or even discussion. We have to reject that notion, believing that dialogue can lead to new solutions.

iii. **There are other options aside from just accept it or walk away.** Commentary: This is similar to the last value. As workers we don’t have to either just shut up or quit our jobs.

4. **Discuss steps in planning a negotiation.** Distribute the “Steps, Planning, and Tips for Better Negotiations” handout. Ask different participants to read each section, and solicit feedback. For example: *What do you think the hardest step of a negotiation is and why?*

5. **Tell participants we will now repeat the original socio-drama** (or perhaps participants want to change the issues the employer and employee are talking about), but this time the worker, instead of stammering or keeping quiet, will initiate a negotiation. You can do this multiple times inviting different participants to play the roles. After each skit, ask participants who were watching the scenario to comment on how the worker did in the negotiation.
In order to negotiate, it is necessary to hold these values:

1. As a human being, woman or man, as a worker, I have value.

2. I don’t always have to keep my mouth shut.

3. There are other options aside from just accept it or walk away.
Steps, Planning, and Tips for BETTER NEGOTIATION

Negotiation Steps:
1. Identify the Problem (what is the root of the problem and what do you want?)
2. Planning
3. Begin the Negotiation (there is never a perfect time!)
4. Come to an Agreement
5. Follow-up and evaluation
6. The struggle continues...

How do we plan for Negotiation?
1. Plan what you want to negotiate about and what you want to ask for.
2. Think of why you have chosen that thing. Plan your message and look for “objective criteria” (ex. I want them to pay me $X.00 for X task)
3. Analyze the perspectives and interests of your opponent.
4. Know the bottom line of what you will accept.
5. Go for it!!

Tips that can be used in negotiation:
- Separate the problem from the person.
- Have an attitude of confidence, firmness, and respect.
- Think of what your face and body language are saying.
- Find a solution “together.”
- Say what you want to happen – specifically.
- Do not attack the person, you do not have to respond to insults with insults.
- Say, “I feel that...”
- Talk about the employer’s interests, “you will want someone who can do a quality job and who is confident.”
- Instead of blocking a position, look for options
- Ask questions, “where does this number come from?”
- Speak about the value of your work
- Listen to the person and respond to what they say, “I hear what you are saying, ____”
- Use “objective criteria” if possible.
- Look to the future, not the past.
Conclusions and Next Steps

1. Talk to your co-workers. Is this a common concern? What could be done better? Is our right to a safe work environment being respected? What are the concerns we have? Can we negotiate for better conditions?

2. Look for support. OSHA, the government agency that protects workers health at work is always available to answer your questions, and take complaints. They can make a surprise visit to the company, and fine the company for certain violations. Check with OSHA to learn about what standards your workplace is violating.

   Also, your local workers’ center is happy to help with a winning strategy to make changes at your job. You can always call the Workers Centers with any questions. Remember, many people want to help you make your job a better place to work.

3. Execute the plan and make sure that you have the support you need to win.