

Safety Principles - Housekeeping Area

Housekeeping activities can be performed safely when general safety principles are applied throughout the day. Some tasks may carry greater risks for injury if specific procedures or instructions are not followed. Safe work procedures separate from these principles have been developed for these tasks.

General housekeeping safety principles would include:

- ✓ Protect your body from chemical & biochemical hazards by wearing appropriate gloves, eye protection, masks and/or aprons.
- ✓ Clean up any spills immediately to reduce the chance for slips. Mark wet floors with a caution sign. Refer to MSDS sheets and WHMIS protocols for cleaning spills, or when transporting, disposing, or refilling chemical containers. MSDS sheets are located at _____.
- ✓ When mixing, decanting or using chemicals ensure that adequate ventilation is present. Never leave hazardous chemicals in open or un-labeled containers.
- ✓ Try to alternate hands, tasks or items to reduce repetition of the same body motion for prolonged periods. (eg. when dusting, alternate right & left hands).
- ✓ When interacting with agitated clients, remain calm, use soft voice tones maintain a safe distance. Avoid arguing or trying to reason with the client in lengthy discussions. Instead, remove yourself from the situation & contact nursing staff to address the client's unmet needs.
- ✓ Report cleaning/equipment concerns to your supervisor.
- ✓ When cleaning under beds raise bed to waist height and use a swivel head mop/dust mop to avoid bending and awkward postures.
- ✓ Wear appropriate closed toe, non-slip footwear, (e.g. No Crocs).
- ✓ Respect your body and reduce sprains and strains by:
 - Working in an upright, straight posture. Try to avoid slouching and twisting your back
 - Use both hands when lifting buckets & heavy containers. Use a wide stance to improve stability, try to keep your back upright, push up with your legs first & keep the load close to your body.
 - Store heavier containers at hip to chest height so lifting them is easier.
 - Always request more assistance when moving heavy items such as furniture & chemical containers.
- ✓ Keep your cleaning cart neat and clean. Always lock your cart when unattended. Put equipment and carts in an appropriate place. When not in use, store cart/chemicals in a secure area.
- ✓ Report any additional safety concerns to your supervisor.