

# TOOL BOX TALKS

## Safety Basics for Custodians

Custodial safety involves many things. Custodians find themselves taking care of many things and doing many jobs. Custodians work all hours of the day and drive to and from work sites. Changing light bulbs and using ladders can also be a requirement. Custodians are exposed to chemicals, slips and trips, hot and cold weather, heavy and awkward lifting and blood borne pathogens. Gather your custodial staff and review these safety tips. Encourage questions and be ready to answer.

### WORKSAFE TIPS

#### DEFENSIVE DRIVING

- Wear your seat belt.
- Slow down.
- Report maintenance or safety issues regarding your company vehicle.
- Store / secure loads as to prevent them from flying around during an accident.
- Increase your following distance.
- Adjust your driving habits to match weather conditions.

#### CHEMICAL SAFETY

- Read the directions before using any chemical.
- Discuss the hazards with your supervisor before using chemicals.
- Read the MSDS (Material Safety Data Sheet) before using chemicals.
- Make sure you have the proper PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) before using a chemical.
- Have facilities or equipment ready for flushing the skin or eyes if a chemical contacts them.

#### FOOTWEAR

- Wear proper footwear to work.
- Wear shoes or boots that are slip resistant.
- Verify the research on slip resistant shoes before making a purchase.
- Consider these footwear manufacturers:
  - Shoes for Crews
  - Sketchers
  - Safe Trax
  - Lehigh
  - Safe T Step
  - TredSafe
  - Keuka Café
  - Cougar Paws

#### SLIPS AND TRIPS

- Beware water on the floor in areas like kitchens, break rooms, restrooms and entrances.
- Know that slips can occur on tile, wood, polished and sealed concrete floors.
- Walk – never run.
- Clean up spills of water or granular material immediately.
- A fall can result in hip injury, lower spine injury, hand and head injuries.

#### CHEMICAL SPLASH – EYE PROTECTION

- Industrial cleaning chemicals can be very strong.
- Some cleaners are strong acids or bases. If a splash occurs to the face, chemical can hit the eyes.
- Chemical splashes result in pain, burning and even permanent loss of vision.
- Wear eye protection in the form of safety glasses at a minimum.
- Wear splash goggles and a face shield when handling strong chemicals.
- Wear safety glasses when changing fluorescent or spot light bulbs.
- Refer to the MSDS for eye protection recommendations.

#### SAFE LIFTING

- Use a two-wheel dolly or cart to move objects.
- Identify handles before lifting.
- Get help with heavy lifts.
- Wear gloves to increase grip and avoid cuts.
- Break down the load into smaller weight loads.
- Plan the route – take the path of least resistance.