



# MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER

## Environmental Services



### Three Steps to a Safer Workplace

**Active observation and follow-up will go a long way toward making your workplace safer. Follow these three steps:**

- 1. Identify hazards or “what can hurt you at work.”** Walk through areas to look for things that can hurt employees, and monitor whether known hazards have been fixed. If you answer “no” to any of the questions below, follow-up is needed.
- 2. Propose solutions.** Assess what changes you can make on your own, and what you need to partner on.
- 3. Take action to make sure the problem is resolved.** Use the *Make the Workplace Safer* Tracking Chart at the end of this document.

### Step 1: Identify Hazards

NAME	LOCATION	DATE			
Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed		
<b>HANDLING, CARRYING, AND LIFTING</b>					
1	Most of the time, are workers able to carry out work without stooping to the floor or being on hands and knees to clean? Can workers usually avoid twisting, reaching overhead, or bending to the side?				
2	Do workers avoid lifting bulky or heavy objects?				
3	Are workers able to get help with heavy loads? (for example, when lifting or moving equipment, heavy trash, or laundry)				
4	Is lightweight and adjustable cleaning equipment available? <i>(For example, lightweight microfiber mops, long-handled scrubbers, lightweight vacuum cleaners, or spring-loaded laundry lifts.)</i>				
5	Do workers alternate using left and right hands or arms when cleaning tasks require repetitive movements?				
6	Are workers using proper lifting techniques on a regular basis?				
7	Do workers have access to dollies or carts to transport materials? Are these being used?				
8	Are workers able to work at a comfortable speed without too many repetitive movements?				

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Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
<b>INFECTIOUS DISEASES</b>			
9			Are sharp objects always disposed of in specific sharps container? Are sharps containers replaced before they overfill?
10			When cleaning contaminated surfaces, do workers use the appropriate disinfectant? Are workers able to follow procedures to clean and decontaminate floors, work surfaces, and other equipment?
11			Do workers wear latex-safe gloves to clean or handle contaminated garbage or laundry bags?
12			If someone is stuck by a used needle, do they have access to counseling, vaccination, and testing?
<b>GARBAGE</b>			
13			Is all trash handled as if hazardous items were contained inside?
14			Is garbage with blood, bodily fluids, or specimens always placed in biohazard bags?
15			Are biohazardous waste bags autoclaved or placed into medical waste shipping barrels for treatment and disposal?
16			Are biohazard bags transported using carts dedicated only for biohazard bags?
<b>CHEMICALS</b>			
17			Are all cleaning solutions clearly labeled with ingredients and any required warnings?
18			Are containers, including spray bottles, closed when not in use?
19			Are Safety Data Sheets (SDS) available for each chemical?
20			Are spill response kit supplies accessible and fully stocked (for example, gloves, goggles, absorbing material)?
21			Are workers experiencing any health effects from chemicals (for example, skin rashes or breathing problems)?
22			If there is a choice, are workers using less toxic cleaning products?

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Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
<b>LAUNDRY</b>			
23	Is contaminated laundry always placed in bags or containers with a biohazard symbol?		
24	Is all laundry handled as if hazardous items were present? (universal precautions)		
25	Do workers who handle dirty laundry wear gloves, masks, caps, and gowns?		
26	If the laundry facilities are loud, do workers use hearing protection?		
27	Are laundry bags loosely filled and light enough for worker to carry easily?		
28	Is dirty laundry in bins free of sharps?		
<b>SLIP AND FALL HAZARDS</b>			
29	Are non-skid mats or flooring provided in wet areas?		
30	Do workers wear non-skid shoes?		
<b>WORKPLACE TEMPERATURE</b>			
31	If the workplace is hot, is there ventilation or a fan to cool the area?		
32	If it is warm, is there clean, fresh drinking water readily available? Is there a cool break area where workers can rest?		
<b>OTHER</b>			
33	Are there any new hazards or other hazards that have not been addressed?		If so, describe below:

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## WORKER KNOWLEDGE

Employees should receive health and safety training and orientation when they start employment, whenever a new hazard is identified, and periodically as a refresher on some topics. Examples of knowledge people should have are listed below. **Do workers in the department know:**

Hazard	Yes	No	Comments/Solution Needed
1 The hazards common to your work what protective measures are in place, and what safety practices to follow?			
2 The hazards of potentially infectious materials and the precautions to use?			
3 How to avoid ergonomic injuries due to awkward body positions (such as reaching overhead, squatting or kneeling) and repetitive movements?			
4 How to safely store, lift and move materials (waste, linen, carts, etc.)?			
5 The hazards of chemicals you work with and how to work with them safely?			
6 How to obtain and use a Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for chemicals you work with?			
7 How to safely dilute and mix cleaning solutions?			
8 What to do for a chemical exposure or spill?			
9 How to choose, wear, remove and dispose of protective clothing and equipment?			
10 How to safely collect, store and dispose of waste, including sharps, biohazard, chemical, radiologic waste?			
11 How to safely use equipment, such as compactor, sanipac, bailer, mobile equipment, ladders, etc.?			
12 What to do in case of an emergency at work?			
13 How to identify safety concerns and whom to report them to?			
14 Any other information or training needed?			If yes, please describe.



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## FOLLOW-UP & TRACKING CHART



### Step 2: Propose Solutions

**For any “no” answers, think about solutions or ways to address the problem.**

- First, think about ways to remove the hazard. This makes your workplace safer and ensures all workers are protected.
- If that’s not possible, think about any policies, procedures or personal protective equipment that is necessary.
- Think about what changes you can make on your own and what changes you need to partner with others (such as other workers, supervisors, facility management) to do.

Write your suggestions for solutions on the “Step 1: Identify Hazards” checklist and on the tracking chart on the next page.

### Step 3: Take Action

**Report any safety hazards you identify. Use the following chart to track and make sure the problems are resolved.**

1. Give a copy of your hazard checklist findings to your supervisor or department manager, your UBT labor co-lead, and your Safety Team representative.
2. Decide who else should receive a copy of your findings, such as members of the UBT or Safety Committee or your shop steward. Make a note of who you gave it to and the date.
3. Follow up after a few weeks. If the problem was not addressed or resolved, think about your next steps.
  - + Who should be informed?
  - + Who can help you advocate for the needed solution?

# MAKE THE WORKPLACE SAFER **FOLLOW-UP AND TRACKING CHART**

NAME		LOCATION		DATE
Safety/Health Problem	What solution is needed?	Date reported and to whom	1 month follow up	Next Steps
			Corrected Is being addressed Not being addressed Don't know/Other:	
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