

The Preventing harm to Cleaning Workers Report

<http://osha.europa.eu>

Terry N Taylor

***Head of Working Environment Information Unit
EU-OSHA***



European Agency
for Safety and Health
at Work

The Cleaning Sector - Facts

<http://osha.europa.eu>

- **Cleaning is carried out in every workplace**
- **The cleaning industry is a growing sector**
- **It is increasingly being put out to tender**
- **The sector is dominated by small businesses, many of which employ fewer than 10 workers.**
- **Cleaning is an essential task, and when done well can reduce both risks to workers' safety and health and costs to the business**

Three big challenges to safe and healthy cleaning

<http://osha.europa.eu>

1. Contracting out ->

- o strong cost-cutting pressures on cleaning companies
- o inadequate investment in training and other management activities essential for worker protection.

2. As labour costs tend to make up the largest part of the costs of a cleaning company, there is a risk that unscrupulous employers will seek to gain an unfair advantage in tendering processes by illegal employment practices

- o Eg. not paying full social insurance costs or employing illegal labour.

3. A poor perception of cleaning and cleaning workers can discourage the effective occupational safety and health management of cleaning services.

- o Eg. failing to provide appropriate equipment and training because the employer does not view the task as important.

Common hazards, risks and health outcomes

<http://osha.europa.eu>

- Risk of slips, trips, and falls, particularly during 'wet work'
- Risk of musculoskeletal disorders, for example from carrying loads or doing repetitive work
- Exposure to dangerous substances contained in cleaning agents
- Exposure to hazardous substances being cleaned, which can include biological hazards such as moulds or human biological wastes
- Psychosocial issues including work-related stress, violence, and bullying
- Risks, such as electric shock, from work equipment

Common work-related health disorders recognised in cleaners include:

<http://osha.europa.eu>

- **Injuries from slips, trips and falls**
- **Musculoskeletal disorders**
- **Work-related stress, anxiety and sleeping disorders**
- **Skin diseases such as contact dermatitis and eczema**
- **Respiratory disorders including asthma, and**
- **Cardiovascular diseases**

<http://osha.europa.eu>

Thank you for your attention !

<http://osha.europa.eu>