

# Preventing Musculoskeletal Injuries in Housekeepers

This fact sheet gives an overview of workplace health and safety requirements intended to control the risk of musculoskeletal injuries and disorders to housekeepers who work in:

- Hotels
- Motels
- Resorts
- Bed and breakfast inns
- Other lodging establishments

Housekeepers can include employees who are also called:

- Guest room attendants
- Room cleaners
- Maids
- Housepersons



## What is the concern?

Hotel housekeepers are at increased risk of developing musculoskeletal injuries caused by their job tasks, which include, for example:

- Sweeping, dusting, scrubbing, mopping, and polishing of floors, tubs, showers, sinks, mirrors, walls, fixtures, and other surfaces
- Making beds
- Vacuuming
- Loading, unloading, pushing, and pulling linen carts
- Removing and supplying linen and other supplies in the rooms
- Collecting and disposing of trash
- Moving furniture



## What is a musculoskeletal injury?

A musculoskeletal injury is an injury caused by a single event (such as a slip, trip, or fall) or by repeated exposure over weeks, months, or years to repetitive motion, force, vibration or awkward positions. These injuries can affect a person's muscles, tendons, ligaments, nerves, joints, bones, back, or blood vessels. They can cause pain in the back, wrist, shoulder, neck, or other parts of the body.

### Cumulative Trauma Injuries

Develop over a period of weeks, months, or years



## What must hotels and other lodging establishments do to reduce the risk of musculoskeletal injuries in housekeepers?

Hotels and other lodging establishments must have an effective, written Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Program (MIPP) that addresses hazards specific to housekeeping. The MIPP must include the following:

### System for communicating with housekeepers

Safety and health information or instructions must be understandable by all housekeepers and must include provisions designed to encourage housekeepers to inform the employer of hazards at work and injuries or symptoms that may be related to such hazards, without fear of reprisal (retaliation).

### Procedures to conduct worksite evaluations

Worksite evaluations must be conducted to identify and evaluate housekeeping hazards. The hazards include, but are not limited to the following:

- Slips, trips, and falls.

- Prolonged or awkward static postures.
- Extreme reaches and repetitive reaches above shoulder height.
- Lifting or forceful whole body or hand exertions.
- Torso-bending, twisting, kneeling, and squatting.
- Pushing and pulling.
- Falling and striking objects.
- Pressure points where a part of the body presses against an object or surface.
- Excessive work rate.
- Inadequate recovery time between housekeeping tasks.

Employers must have an effective way to involve housekeepers and their union representative in designing and conducting the evaluations.

The initial worksite evaluation for identifying housekeeping hazards must be completed by October 1, 2018, or within three months after the opening of a new lodging establishment. The worksite evaluation must be reviewed and updated:

- Whenever new processes, practices, procedures, equipment, or guest room renovations are introduced that may increase housekeeping hazards.
- Whenever a new or previously unrecognized housekeeping hazard is identified and brought to the employer's attention.
- At least annually.

Housekeepers must be notified of the results of the worksite evaluations in writing or by posting the results in a location that is readily accessible.

#### Procedures to investigate musculoskeletal injuries to housekeepers

The employer must obtain input from the injured housekeeper, the housekeeper's union representative, and the housekeeper's supervisor as to whether any other control measure, procedure, or tool would have prevented the injury.

#### Methods for correcting hazards

Employers must correct hazards identified in worksite evaluations and in investigations of musculoskeletal injuries to housekeepers. They must have an effective way to involve housekeepers and their union representative in identifying and evaluating possible corrective measures.

### What training must employers provide?

Hotels and other lodging establishments must train housekeepers and supervisors in a language that they can

**Incorrect**



**Correct**



understand. The training must be provided:

- When the MIPP is first established and every year after that.
- To all new housekeepers and supervisors.
- To all housekeepers given new job assignments for which training was not previously provided.
- When new equipment or work practices are introduced.
- Whenever the employer learns of a new or previously unrecognized hazard.

#### Training for housekeepers must include the following:

- The signs, symptoms, and risk factors commonly associated with musculoskeletal injuries.
- The elements of the employer's MIPP, and how the written MIPP and all records of the steps to implement it will be made available to housekeepers.
- The process for reporting safety and health concerns without fear of reprisal.
- Body mechanics and safe practices.
- Why and how to report symptoms and injuries to the employer as soon as possible.
- Practice using the kinds of equipment and tools the housekeeper will be expected to use.
- An opportunity for interactive questions and answers with a person knowledgeable about hotel housekeeping equipment and procedures.

### General information:

This fact sheet only provides an overview, so housekeepers and their union representatives need to refer to the California Code of Regulations, title 8, section **3345** ([www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3345.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/Title8/3345.html)) for additional details. If a housekeeper or their union representative wants to **file a complaint**, they can go to [www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/Complaint.htm](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/Complaint.htm) or call the Cal/OSHA District Office closest to the workplace. Every employer is required to provide a poster that employees can easily see and that lists the addresses and telephone numbers of all the Cal/OSHA offices in California.

