

HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK

Curriculum For The Residential Cleaning Industry

Trainer's Guide

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Agenda

Part 1: A healthy and safe workplace

1. Agenda, Introduction and Attendance
2. Identify hazardous chemicals by reading labels and ingredients
3. Understand appropriate ways to handle and protect yourself from toxic cleaning chemicals

BREAK

Part 2: What can we do to protect ourselves at work?

1. Educate and explain the importance of non-toxic cleaning alternatives
2. Ergonomics for workers in the cleaning industry
3. Know your health and safety rights
4. Negotiating for better working conditions

EVALUATION

Materials for the Class:

Attendance sheet, Large paper, PPE (Gloves, face mask, safety glasses, apron), Markers, Empty and washed bottles of regular cleaning products

Class Goals:

Part 1: Workers learn they have the right to be free from hazards at work and understand practical ways to protect their safety at work.

Part 2: Workers learn to identify their capacity to exercise their rights to safe and healthy work and practice how to protect themselves in their work environment.

Handouts:

Product Warning, Green cleaning kit, Where to buy non-toxic products, Know your rights.

Part 1: A Healthy and Safe Workplace

1. Agenda, Introduction and Attendance

Introduce the trainers. Explain the class agenda. Take class attendance.

2. Identify hazardous chemicals by reading labels and ingredients

Identifying hazardous chemicals activity. Identify health hazards activity. Hazard map activity.

Activity 1

Identifying Hazardous Chemicals

Using empty and washed bottles of regular cleaning products (such as Ajax, bleach, oven cleaner, and Windex) pick a product bottle and ask the participants what they know about the health hazards of using that product. Listen to their answers and write their answers on the board.

Remind workers that in the cleaning industry, they may be working with chemicals that are hazardous to them and have long term health effects.

Share handout: Warning about cleaning products/ Hazardous chemicals commonly used in cleaning.

Activity 2

Identify health hazards when using toxic chemicals

Using the empty chemical bottles students will work in groups to identify the names of the toxic chemicals in each product by using the handout “Warnings about cleaning products” as a reference.

On the board, the instructor is to write the warning words used in the empty chemical cleaning product bottles, in both languages, Spanish and English. Eg. Warning= Advertencia.

A Warning example would be: Ammonia gas is strong and has no color. You can be poisoned if you drink or touch this product or products with high concentrations of ammonia. You may feel sick if you breathe or inhale ammonia.

Be sure to discuss the following points:

Work in well ventilated areas

Never mix chemicals.

Always turn on bathroom fan when using chemicals.

Always wash your hands after using or being exposed to any cleaning product and after removing any equipment used for cleaning. Always protect yourself and others.

Always make sure to label toxic chemical appropriately

Activity 3
Hazard Map
(Identify Hazards at Work)

Students work in small groups to create maps of different types of workplaces. They can use plain paper and markers. To begin, students must draw a floor plan of a workplace in the cleaning industry. The plan must show work areas, equipment, rooms, etc. Maps can be basic.

When finished, students will decide where hazards are located in their workplaces and mark them. Using the data sheets as a reference, students should mark these places on the floor plan. Use the following codes:

- **Red for safety hazards and physical hazards.**
- **Blue for chemical and biological hazards.**
- **Green for additional hazards.**

You can use color codes or other symbols to indicate hazards. You can, for example, use a different color for safety hazards, physical hazards, chemical hazards and biological hazards.

Remember that the most important objective of this exercise is for the students to identify hazards in their workplaces so don't worry too much that the category is correct.

If the student is not sure whether something is dangerous, mark it as a danger and discuss it with the group.

Students should take about 15 minutes to prepare the maps, and then submit them to the group. Put the maps up on the wall. Ask the group to participate in a discussion about the maps, paying special attention to the chemical hazards.

See an example of a Hazard Map on the following page.

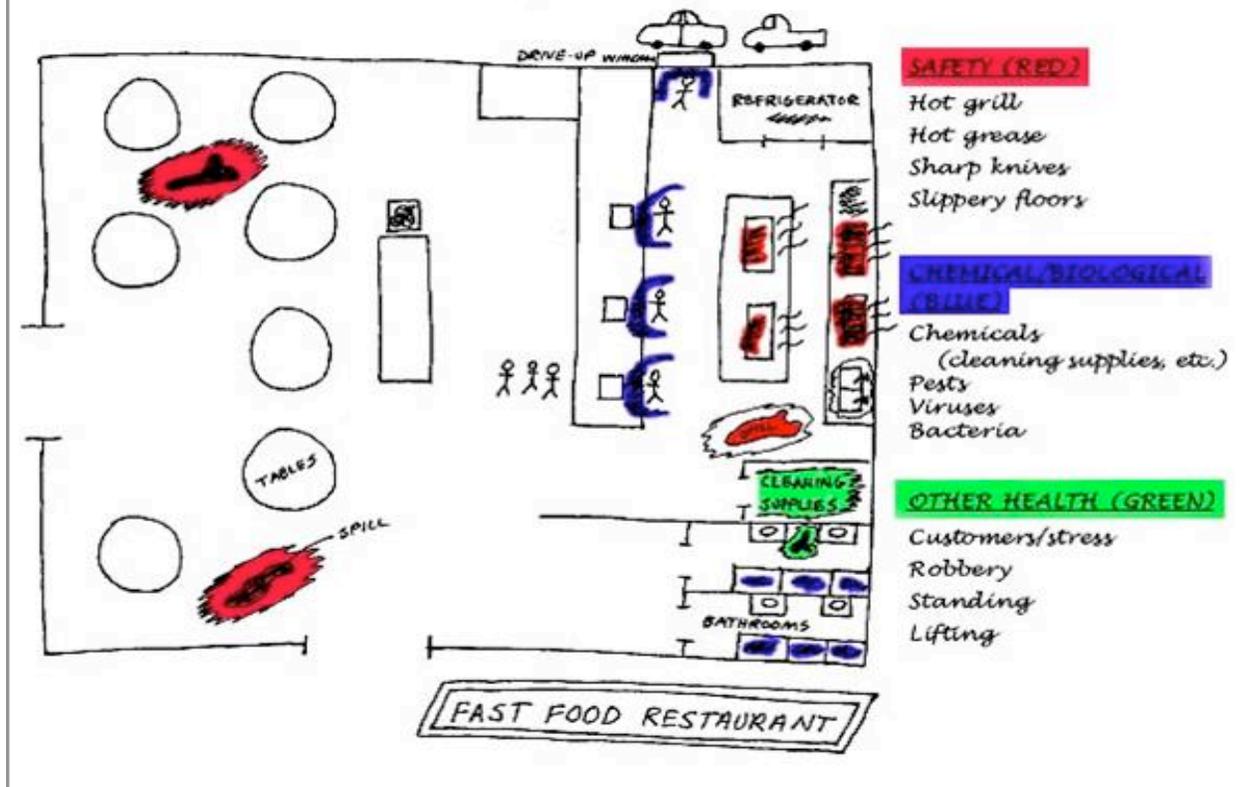
Example Hazard Map

Students will draw maps in color.

Red = Safety Hazards

Blue = Chemical and Biological Hazards

Green = Other Health Hazards



3. Understand appropriate ways to handle and protect yourself from toxic cleaning chemicals

Hazard control activity. Personal Protective Equipment race.

Activity 4 **Hazard Control**

Using the hazard maps the students created in the previous exercise, work with these groups to choose a chemical danger on their maps they think is important.

Students should then take 5-10 minutes to prepare a brief scenario where they as workers confront their employer to discuss ways the employer can control this risk at work. Discuss with the students the different hazard control methods.

Depending on the needs and size of the classroom, some students may act as employers and others as employees or instructors and employers can act as facilitators. If possible, each student must have a part in who is speaking.

Hazard Control Methods:

Listed by effectiveness

Elimination (Most Effective)

The best way to control a hazard is to eliminate it completely. An example of elimination: Avoid buying those products to clean your home/workplace.

Substitution

The use of alternative cleaning products that have no toxic chemicals. Products made with natural or non-toxic ingredients.

Engineering

Engineering controls are another way in which technology can be used to change the work environment, machine, or equipment to reduce the danger.

Work /Administrative Controls

A change of administrative controls or work practices means changing the way and the structure of how work gets done. Example: Rather than have an employee exposed to danger for eight hours a day, the employer may be assigned to four workers to work for two hours each. This could be used for repetitive tasks or to any exposure to a chemical hazard.

Personal Protective Equipment (Least effective)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) may include, but is not limited to, respirators and protective equipment for eyes, and gloves. PPE is the least effective way to protect workers because it does not eliminate the dangerous situation. If the equipment fails the workers are still exposed to danger.

Activity 5

Personal Protective Equipment Race

Set multiple sets of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) on a table in front of the group. Divide the class into two teams and have them line up against the wall. The first two students at the front of their lines will be the first to compete against each other in a race.

The instructor will then hold up one empty chemical container and ask the first two students which types of personal protective equipment they think they would need for protection when using that chemical.

The students will then race to the table to select the appropriate PPE and then back to their team. Each member on their team will then one at a time put on the PPE correctly and say the name of the equipment in English as fast as they can. Whichever team completes these tasks the fastest correctly wins that round.

The game will repeat until each student has a chance to race.

BREAK

Part 2: What can we do to protect ourselves at work?

1. Educate and explain the importance of non-toxic cleaning alternatives

Non-toxic cleaning alternatives activity.

Activity 6

Non-toxic Cleaning Alternatives

The goal of this activity is to identify the cleaning products currently used by the workers and identify healthy and safe alternative cleaning agents.

Ask the workers to come up to the whiteboard to write the name of the products they currently use and have them share what the product is used for.

Divide the class into two groups. The instructor will draw two columns on the board and ask a member of each group to come up to the whiteboard. As one student writes a name of a chemical cleaning product in one column the student of the other group will write in the second column an alternative product that can be used as a non-toxic substitute. The group will then discuss the advantages or danger of using each product.

Handout: How to Make a Green Cleaning Kit flyer.

2. Ergonomics for workers in the cleaning industry

What is ergonomics?

Ergonomics is the science of designing jobs to accommodate the needs of the worker, rather than making the worker fit the job requirements.

For many workers, ergonomics may not be high on their list of priorities, but the injuries caused by poorly designed work conditions can lead to serious injuries over time. These injuries can occur in the hands, wrists, joints, back, or other body parts. These injuries are called musculoskeletal disorders.

For employers, building a well-designed job can be expensive at first because they may need to spend money on equipment or training. However, injuries resulting from poor working conditions can end up costing more money to the employer in the long run. Employers lose money when employees miss work because of pain or injury, and is expensive for employers to have to hire and train new workers when other workers quit due to injury or illness.

Some examples of working conditions that can cause injury are:

- Tools and tasks that require you to twist your hands or joints
- Tasks that require applying too much pressure on parts of the hand, back, wrists or joints
- Tasks that require working with arms outstretched or overhead
- Tasks that require working with back arched
- Tasks that require lifting or pushing heavy loads

Activity 7 Practice Lifting Safely

Have students practice lifting objects safely in small groups.

WAYS OF LIFTING SAFELY

- Keep your body close to the object.
- Bend at the hips and knees. Gloves can improve your grip.
- Lift smoothly and slowly, keeping the object close to your body. Keep the position between the knees and shoulders.
- If you have to turn, turn with your feet instead of bending over.



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3. Know your health and safety rights

Rights under OSHA activity.

Activity 8 Rights under OSHA

[Now, all standing.]

On wall is a sign that says YES, on another wall is a sign that says NO.
Explain that as you read a series of questions. If they believe the answer is yes, they move to stand below the sign that says YES, if they think the answer is NO, they have to stand under the sign that says NO.

- Do you have the right to a safe and healthy workplace?

YES

- Do you have the right to receive safety information?

YES

- Do you have the right to receive safety training?

YES

- Are OSHA employees the only ones who can ask employers to change a dangerous work situation?

NO (You have the right to ask the employer to change the dangerous situation.)

- Do you have the right to make a complaint to OSHA and to participate in the process?

YES

- Do you have the right to be protected against retaliation?

YES

- Do you have the right to know which chemical products you used at work?

YES

- Does your employer have the right to refuse your request to use Protective Personal Equipment at work?

NO (You have the right to have Protective Personal Equipment at work)

Share a copy of the "Know Your Rights" handout to the workers.

4. Negotiating for better working conditions

During the rest of the class, we practice exercising our rights to a safe and healthy working environment.

Activity 9

Let's examine a common situation

Trainer reads the following story

Maria has cleaned the house of Mr. and Mrs. Lancing over many years. The bathroom has no windows. Each time Maria cleans the bathroom with bleach and AJAX she gets dizzy to the point of fainting. Maria was not complaining because the Lancings are nice and she doesn't want to lose her job. However, lately Maria has had a strange cough and thinks that is connected to the chemicals in the cleaners. Maria has just learned that there are cleaners without toxic chemicals. She wants to ask if the Lancings can buy these safer cleaners, but is afraid.

- **What rights does Maria have?**
- **What reasons should Maria give to the Lancings to buy the cleaners that are not toxic?**
- **What can Maria do to help her employer provide non-toxic cleaning products?** (Answer: Tell them where to buy it and how much it costs - see handout there is a list.)

Activity 10
Play- Practicing Rights

Choose two people to act in the play. One will play the role of Maria, the employer who is spring cleaning and needs to hire a domestic worker for a week. Juana will play the role of a domestic worker who will do the cleaning job for Maria. Maria asks Juana to use a AJAX and bleach together to remove grime in the bathroom that has very little ventilation. Juana believes that the chemicals are not safe and wants access to personal protective equipment to do the job.

Ask students:

- **What did Juana do?**
- **What other methods can be used to gain what she needed?**
- **What other solutions could be used to rectify this dangerous situation?**

Write their answers on the wall (in general terms/pictures).

Summarize all the tactics discussed in class:

- 1) Know your rights to a healthy and safe work environment
- 2) Learn a few common words and useful phrases in English to help communicate your needs.
- 3) Know the work and dangers, and learn methods of protection.
- 4) Learn about resources that help employers meet their responsibilities, such as where to buy protective equipment, how much it costs, etc.
- 5) Learn how healthy and safe working is beneficial to the employer and the employee.

EVALUATION

Double Check Attendance Sheet for Accuracy

Assist Students in Completing the Evaluation Survey

