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**GMB**

PROTECTING YOU  
AT WORK

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**SAFETY REP'S CHECKLIST**

	YES	NO
Have adequate risk assessments been carried out in your workplace?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is it clear where managerial responsibility lies for health & safety?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is full information available on all chemicals in use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is equipment checked and maintained on a regular basis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are the HSE management standards on stress applied?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is there a viable working alone policy in place?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Are you supplied with suitable and sufficient PPE?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

This list is not exhaustive and there may be a need to raise other health and safety issues with your safety rep, organiser or RHSO.

**JOIN GMB NOW  
CLEANERS ARE SAFER  
IN GMB**

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**HOW DO I JOIN? JOIN ONLINE AT [WWW.GMB.ORG.UK](http://WWW.GMB.ORG.UK)**

Or just fill in parts 1, 2 and 3 or 4 below and hand the form to your local GMB representative or post it to GMB, FREEPOST (WC2268), London SW19 4YY (you do not need a stamp). If you have any questions call GMB on 020 8947 3131, email [info@gmb.org.uk](mailto:info@gmb.org.uk) or visit our website [www.gmb.org.uk](http://www.gmb.org.uk)

FOR UNION USE ONLY Section  Branch No  Membership No  Date of joining

**GMB membership application form** PLEASE USE BLOCK CAPITALS

**1 TELL US ABOUT YOU**

Surname  First name  Title Mrs/Miss/Ms/Mr Date of birth   
Home address  Home Tel  Email   
Postcode  Mobile  I agree to abide by GMB rules Signature   
We ask for your ethnic origins as part of our equal opportunities policy of improving services to all members  
Bangladeshi  / Black African  / Black Caribbean  / Black British   
Chinese  / Indian  / Irish  / Pakistani  / White   
Other:

**2 TELL US ABOUT YOUR JOB**

Employer  Your job  Pay No   
Address where you work  How many hours a week do you work?  Work Tel  Pay Date   
Postcode

**3 CHOOSE EITHER AUTHORISATION OF DEDUCTION OF YOUR TRADE UNION CONTRIBUTIONS FROM YOUR PAY**

Section 68, Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidated) Act 1992 as amended  
I authorise my employer to deduct from my pay each week/month the sum of £  or other amounts as may be fixed by the GMB from time to time.  
Please start the deductions immediately and pay the amounts to the GMB.  
I note that this agreement may be cancelled by one month's notice in writing.  
I give permission to my employer to notify the GMB of any future change of address.  
Signed  Cash   
Date

**4 OR INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY DIRECT DEBIT**

Please fill in the form and send to GMB, 22-24 Worples Road, London SW19 4DD  
Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society branch   
Originator's Identification Number   
To the Manager of  Bank/Building Society   
Address  Postcode   
For GMB official use only. This is not part of the instruction to your Bank/Building Society. If your A/C number is not available fill in your address below.  
Instructions to your Bank or Building Society. Please pay GMB Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this Instruction may remain with GMB and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.  
Signature(s)   
Date   
Name(s) of account holder(s)   
Bank/Building Society Account Number  Bank/Building Society Sort Code   
Reference number (Office use only)

**GMB campaigning for improved health & safety**

**Cleaners**

Cleaners are often the neglected part of the workforce when it comes to health and safety. Many employers make assumptions on how safe cleaning is and in effect leave them to get on with it. Yet cleaners face a range of health and safety problems in their daily working lives.



Join GMB, the union for all cleaning staff, and ensure you receive the same protection and advice as thousands of your colleagues

If you are not yet a member of GMB JOIN TODAY



Caution  
Wet floor



### MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Your employer has clear health and safety responsibilities under the law. There should be a health and safety policy which should detail who is responsible for the supervision of workers health, safety and welfare. A competent person should be appointed to carry out risk assessments. These should establish as safe a system of work possible by looking at the hazards encountered every day and looking to eliminate them. As elimination is not always possible measures should be introduced to reduce their effect to the lowest level possible. GMB can help educate safety reps to challenge inadequate risk assessments on your behalf.

Management also have an obligation to ensure that any health and safety instructions or training is given in an understandable way. This might mean producing advice in other languages or using pictures to explain hazardous situations.

### USING CHEMICALS

Perhaps the most obvious hazard cleaners encounter is exposure to cleaning chemicals. All chemicals supplied by the employer should have clear instructions on how they should be used, where they should be used and if there is a need to wear any protective clothing, such as gloves or an overall. Chemical use is covered by the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (often abbreviated to COSHH). Data relating to any chemical used, including its disposal, should be given to operatives. Training in the correct use of chemicals, particularly when being used for the first time is an important part of the COSHH regulations.

### BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS

Biological Hazards such as bodily fluids are also covered by the COSHH regulations. A clear procedure needs to be established when dealing with body fluids which might include faeces,

vomit or blood. This should detail any chemicals to be used to sterilise the contaminated area, what equipment is to be used, including personal protection and the disposal method of dirty liquid or material. If the contaminated material comes under the description of clinical waste there will be special disposal measures to be followed. If there is the possibility of contracting an infectious disease then there will be a need to establish an inoculation policy for greater protection.

### CLEANING EQUIPMENT

Due to the cleaning industry often having to undergo tendering for competitive contracts, the equipment is often old and potentially dangerous. All equipment should be examined and maintained on a regular basis. In addition electrical equipment should also be subject to regular testing, this is known as Portable Appliance Testing and the testing should be recorded. Older machines may vibrate more than they were originally designed to do potentially causing muscle and nerve problems. Again these machines should be maintained on a regular basis and disposed of when their effective working life is over.

### LONE WORKING

By its very nature a cleaning job may mean working in isolation from your colleagues, particularly where the work has to be done in large buildings often with many floors. There should be a system established, initially at supervisory level, where regular checks are carried out on operatives. Where a worker is in a building alone without supervision then some form of communication or reporting system needs to be put in place. As lone workers are more vulnerable there may be the possibility of physical assault from intruders, as such a regular checking in system should be established with a supervisor or central controller.

GMB recognises cleaners' problems and with knowledge and experience can help you tackle these issues in the workplace.

### STRESS

Stress is not just a problem for those with managerial roles. It is acknowledged that where there is little or no control on how a job is carried out, where work is routine, mundane or done in isolation then stress can be a major problem. The HSE have established management standards to help deal with stress in the workplace. GMB have experience of dealing with these standards and can approach management to help set up mechanisms to tackle stress related issues.

### UNSOCIAL/LONG HOURS

Cleaning is often carried out at times when the regular occupants of the building are not present. This can often mean early starts and/or late finishes, particularly if there is a need to do more than one job due to low wages or reduced hours per job. Tiredness can contribute towards accidents as workers are more susceptible to injury when their concentration might be affected. These situations need to be taken into account by employers and GMB has experience in negotiating in many similar situations.

### SLIPS, TRIPS AND FALLS

Slippery surfaces, uneven flooring, bad light and unmarked cables are just some of the trip hazards cleaners can encounter every working day. Warning signs and cones should be used where floors may be wet and slippery. Uneven floors should be reported and the faults rectified. Bad lighting can usually be fixed by increasing the wattage of the light source and cables should be bundled and if possible safely hidden or clearly

marked. Where cleaning has to be done at height, a risk assessment should be used to identify the type of equipment that has to be used so that the job can be done safely.

### PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Personal protective equipment refers to any item a worker might have to wear to protect themselves from hazards such as dust, chemicals or blood. Cleaners would normally expect to be supplied, free of charge, with protective equipment such as gloves, overalls, shoes and masks. The type of equipment required will be determined by the risk assessment.

### GMB SAFETY REPS

GMB safety reps are given access to both training and materials when they are elected. This means that they can often approach management on collective or individual problems in an attempt to get them resolved. They also often have access to information through GMB which the employer may not be aware of.