

Workplace Hazards in Building and Property Maintenance

This fact sheet is for students undertaking work experience programs, and for their host employers. It can be used as a tool to assist with task planning, and to develop appropriate induction, training and supervision to minimise any risk to students while they are 'at work'.

Students must be given instruction, and must be supervised at all times. Consideration must always be given to hazards when allocating tasks. If any risk exists, students must NOT undertake the activity.

Hazard	Possible Harmful Effects	Possible Employer Action to Prevent Injury / Illness	Preventative Action Students Can Take
Equipment (such as floor polishers, high pressure cleaners) <i>and</i> powered hand tools (such as drills, nail guns, sanders)	Using heavy equipment may result in strains and sprains Hand and eye injuries are the most common injuries resulting from use of powered hand tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide training in relevant hazards and safe work methods ◆ Maintain equipment and tools in safe operating condition ◆ Keep safe distances between the work and other people (workers and members of the public) 	<p>Students must NOT operate powered hand tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Operations requiring the use of powered hand tools may be observed – PPE (hearing or face protection) must be worn where necessary
Electricity (including electrical extension leads)	Electric shock, electrocution Tripping hazards for people walking through areas where long electrical leads are in use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Ensure power is isolated if working on electrical fittings or fixtures ◆ Do not use electrical equipment near water or in wet weather ◆ Ensure electrical equipment and leads are regularly inspected, tested and tagged 	<p>Students must NOT work on electrical fittings or fixtures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Immediately report any observed electrical fault in equipment or leads (including extension leads)
Work at height (e.g. clearing debris from roofs and gutters, cleaning windows, painting walls, eaves or guttering)	Falls can result in serious injury or death	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Assess every task to determine whether the need for work at height can be avoided ◆ Use appropriate fall prevention measures, such as work platforms, perimeter protection, safety harnesses and/or static lines 	<p>Students must NOT undertake work which presents any risk of a fall</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Don't agree to perform any work at height – many tasks can be safely done from the ground (e.g. cleaning high windows with a pole extension)
Hazardous substances (chemicals) – e.g. paint, solvents, cleaning liquids and powders	Irritation or burns to skin, dermatitis from continued use Nausea and headaches from breathing fumes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and document safe work procedures ◆ Provide appropriate PPE: gloves, overalls, respirator, safety glasses, boots 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow safe chemical handling procedures ◆ Don't use solvents to clean your hands ◆ Wear PPE where provided ◆ Clean up spills immediately
Vehicle traffic	Being struck by vehicles when working near roads, driveways, car parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide signs and barriers to warn and divert vehicle traffic ◆ Provide instruction and supervision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Work only within designated safe areas ◆ Maintain signs and barriers
UV radiation	Where maintenance requires work out of doors, sunburn and skin cancer present significant risks to health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide shade where practicable ◆ Provide appropriate headgear, PPE and sunscreen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Wear appropriate clothing to minimise UV radiation exposure ◆ Use PPE and sunscreen
Heat and cold	Fatigue, heat stress in hot and/or humid conditions. Diminished concentration can result in injuries if safety measures are forgotten	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide regular rest breaks ◆ Provide shade where practicable ◆ Re-schedule work if extreme weather conditions present risk ◆ Provide appropriate PPE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Wear clothing appropriate to the weather conditions ◆ Take regular rest breaks in shade where practicable
Manual handling (bending, reaching, stretching, pulling, lifting)	Musculoskeletal disorders, including sprains and strains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Provide mechanical aids ◆ Provide training to enable tasks to be completed safely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Follow instructions and training ◆ Use mechanical aids provided ◆ Seek help if you think a team lift may be required
Sexual harassment, work place bullying	Emotional stress, fear and anxiety, physical illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Establish work place policy ◆ Provide staff briefings or training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Report any concerns immediately

