

UNISON can make your workplace safer

Research has shown that trade union safety representatives are far better informed about safety than managers. Trade unions help make workplaces safer, and UNISON—the largest public service union in Europe—has a strong record of campaigning on health and safety issues.

UNISON's commitment to health and safety has forced employers to sit up and take notice.

You can help to protect your health, safety and welfare by joining UNISON today.

Joining is easy. Just ask the person who gave you this leaflet for an application form or fill in the coupon below and send it to: UNISON, FREEPOST, 1 Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9AJ. Or call **UNISONdirect**: Freephone 0800 70 70 77. You can contact someone on this number from 6am to midnight on weekdays, and from 9am to 4pm on Saturdays.

I would like more information about joining UNISON

Name

Address for correspondence

Postcode

Workplace address (if different from above)

Postcode

Job title

Employer

Designed and produced by UNISON Communications Department. Published (and printed) by UNISON, 1 Mabledon Place, London WC1H 9AJ. (Printers ref 4469)
<http://www.unison.org.uk> CU/2000/11193/stock no.1792

The UNISON logo consists of the word "UNISON" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a stylized blue wave graphic above the letters "I" and "O".

UNISON:
Caring
for
cleaning
staff

UNISON: Caring for cleaning staff

UNISON believes that no one's health should suffer because of the work they do. However, one group of UNISON members regularly suffers health and safety accidents and ill-health at work. The health, safety and welfare of cleaning staff are often overlooked.

Cleaners are an important part of any organisation and they carry out a range of essential duties. Yet cleaning staff have to put up with poor working conditions, and use dangerous substances and equipment.

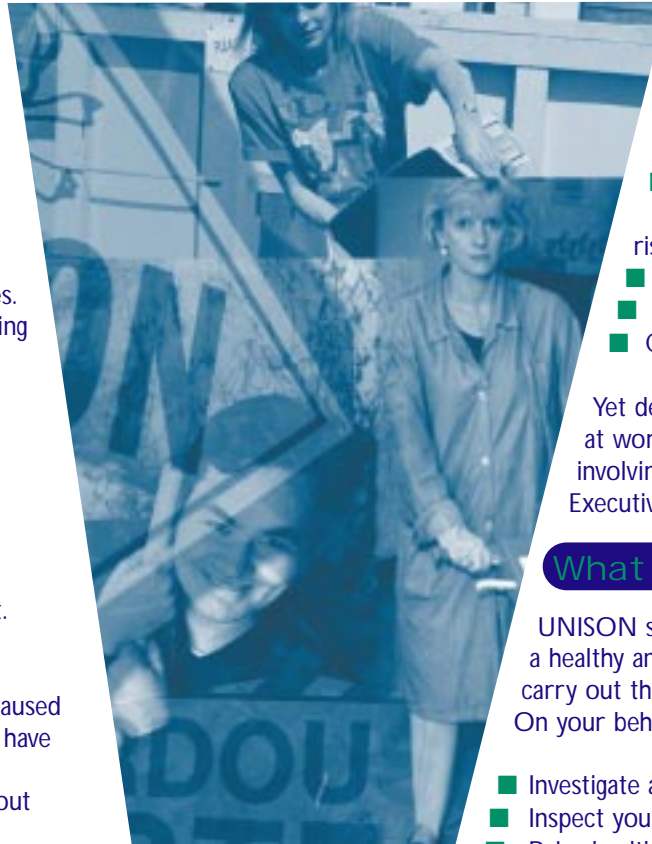
What are the risks?

Cleaners are often expected to:

- Use old, worn-out and poorly maintained floor-cleaning machines and other equipment.
- Regularly lift heavy bags, bins and equipment, sometimes up and down stairs. Cleaners are particularly at risk from back injuries, often caused by the equipment they use and the way they have to use it.
- Use cleaning fluids and other chemicals without proper information or training.
- Wear old, tatty overalls that they have to clean themselves.
- Use outdated methods of working that are potentially dangerous.

In addition, cleaners are often excluded from training given to other workers, for example, on fire instructions and drills. They may also work alone, which can mean increased risks.

But these hazards are totally avoidable.



Employer duties

The law says that your employer must identify any risks to your health and safety. Where risks are found measures must be put in place to protect you.

Your employer must:

- Protect you from hazards and dangers, such as exposure to chemicals that might put your health at risk.
- Provide you with information and training.
- Provide equipment and clothing to keep you safe.
- Consult you on health and safety issues.

Yet despite these legal duties, cleaners are regularly injured at work. Did you know that over 3,000 serious accidents involving cleaners are reported to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) each year?

What can UNISON do?

UNISON safety representatives want to ensure that you work in a healthy and safe environment. They have legal rights to help them carry out their duties.

On your behalf they can:

- Investigate any problems.
- Inspect your workplace or work area.
- Raise health and safety issues with your employer.
- Get information and advice from UNISON.

As a UNISON member you can raise any complaints, queries or worries with your UNISON safety rep.