

## Cleaning and Hygiene: Director's Briefing

Ensuring that a building, site or location is kept clean is not only a legal requirement but it can have a positive impact on visitors to the organisation who owns or runs that facility. First impressions count.

Cleaning can involve accessing all parts of a site or building exposing operatives to the full range of risks on that site. Operatives may work at height, access confined spaces or work on their own.

### What are the key risk areas associated with cleaning and hygiene?

- Window cleaning
- slips, trips and falls
- use of chemicals and substances hazardous to health
- falls from height
- musculoskeletal disorders
- pest control
- litter clearance outside the building
- exposure to sharps and biological hazards
- spillage clearance
- food storage and preparation areas
- personal hygiene standards.

### Case Study

A window cleaner sustained broken ribs, arm and fingers when he fell 2.3m from his ladder while cleaning the windows of a show home on a new housing estate. The ladder was not secured or footed; the ground was dry but sloped gently away from the building. The construction company had not produced a method statement and the injured man had received no health and safety induction when he arrived on the site.

### How should the risks be managed?

- Determine cleaning regimes and frequencies for the site consider the access requirements for cleaning contractors
- address work at height requirements for window cleaners
- make sure that suitable COSHH assessments are carried out
- where healthcare is provided make sure that cleaning regimes take account of standards of personal hygiene and infection control
- for catering facilities ensure that high standards of personal hygiene are adopted with ducts and flues regularly inspected and cleaned
- appoint suitably competent contractors
- consider the safety of cleaning contractors
- provide cleaning staff with details of fire emergency procedures
- ensure suitable first aid arrangements are in place for cleaning operatives
- provide site information to cleaning staff and consider providing it in languages other than English
- review the health and safety if your building was recently built or refurbished
- determine what PPE is required for cleaning staff
- make sure that cleaning equipment is subject to suitable maintenance regimes
- where fall arrest, access equipment and safety devices are provided make sure that they are subject to adequate inspection and testing

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