

Summer

Lesson

15

# Janitors and Building Cleaners

## Career Exploration



### What Janitors Do

Janitors are also referred to as custodians. Janitors keep buildings clean, orderly, and in good condition. In keeping buildings clean, janitors may gather and empty the trash, sweep, mop, and vacuum floors, wash windows, clean tables and counters. They also make minor repairs. In addition to making sure the inside of buildings are clean, some janitors work outdoors mowing lawns and sweeping walkways. In order to perform their duties, janitors learn to use many cleaning tools. Some common tools they use are mops, brooms, rakes, shovels, carpet cleaners, and floor buffers.

### Work Environment

Though being a janitor can be a rewarding career, it is not easy work. It is physically demanding and may require workers to get dirty. Janitors are on their feet and moving around during the entire workday. They must move or lift heavy furniture, supplies, and equipment. As a result, the work may be hard on the back, arms, and legs. Some tasks, such as cleaning restrooms and trash areas, can be unpleasant and dirty work. Janitors have a higher rate of injuries than most careers. They sometimes suffer minor cuts, bruises, and burns from tools and chemicals. Most janitors and building cleaners do work indoors, but some may work outdoors.

**Answer each question with a complete sentence on a separate piece of paper.**

1. What are four duties of a janitor?
2. What may some janitors do outside?
3. What are four common tools a janitor may use?
4. In what way can being a janitor be demanding?
5. Some tasks janitors do such as cleaning a bathroom may be considered what?
6. What must janitors move or lift?
7. What injuries may janitors suffer while working?

Source: 2018, Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook.



## How to Become a Janitor

Janitors do not need any formal education or degree. This is because most janitors learn on the job. Beginners typically work with more experienced janitors and are taught how to perform the different janitorial tasks and skills. On the job, they also learn how to use different tools as well as make minor repairs. Though no formal education is required to become a janitor, it is always helpful to take vocational classes in high school, adult school, or at a community college. Vocational classes can help a person build experience and skills. A person can also obtain a certification from different janitorial or construction associations such as The International Sanitary Supply Association. Vocational classes and/or certifications make applicants more appealing to employers and help a person obtain promotions.

### Important Qualities:

The following are important qualities that are helpful in being successful as a Janitor.

#### Important Qualities

**Interpersonal skills.** Janitors need to be able to get along well with their supervisors, other workers, and with the people that work in the buildings.

**Mechanical skills.** Janitors need to be able to operate different tools and equipment as well as make minor repairs.

**Physical stamina.** Janitors need to be able to spend most of their workday on their feet, moving about.

**Physical strength.** Janitors must be strong enough to lift and move materials, equipment, and furniture.

**Answer each question with a complete sentence on a separate piece of paper.**

8. Why don't janitors need a formal education or degree?
9. What do new janitors typically do in order to learn janitorial skills?
10. What is helpful for a person interested in being a janitor to take?
11. What can vocational classes do for janitor applicants and/or workers?
12. What are three important qualities to have to be a janitor?
13. Who do janitors need to be able to get along with?
14. Why is it helpful for janitors to have mechanical skills?
15. Why is it helpful for janitors to have physical stamina?

## Pay and Work Schedule

As with most jobs, wages often vary depending upon experience and skills. In 2018, the average hourly wage for janitors was about \$12.50. Those with experience make upwards of \$20.75 per hour. Most janitors and building cleaners work full time. Full-time means that a person works forty hours per week. Because office buildings are often cleaned while they are empty, many cleaners and janitors work evening hours.



## Job Outlook

The job outlook for janitors appears strong. From 2018 to 2028, employment of janitors and building cleaners is projected to grow 10 percent. The growth for janitors is faster than the average growth rate for all occupations. Most job openings will come from the need to replace the many workers who are leaving or retiring from this career. Also, many new jobs will be created in facilities related to healthcare. The healthcare industry is growing rapidly and requires many janitors.

*Answer each question with a complete sentence on a separate piece of paper.*

16. What is the average hourly wage for a janitor?
17. How much do janitors with experience and skills make?
18. How many hours do most janitors work?
19. Why do many janitors work evening hours?
20. What does the line graph show?
21. How does the job outlook appear for janitors?
22. What is the projected growth rate for janitors?
23. Where will job openings come from the need of?
24. Where will many new jobs for janitors be created?