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# Service Occupations

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## Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations

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### Building Cleaning Workers

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(O\*NET 37-1011.01, 37-1011.02, 37-2011.00, 37-2012.00)

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#### Significant Points

- Limited training requirements, low pay, and numerous part-time and temporary jobs should contribute to the need to replace workers who leave this very large occupation each year.
- Businesses providing janitorial and cleaning services on a contract basis are expected to be one of the fastest growing employers of these workers.

#### Nature of the Work

Building cleaning workers—which includes janitors, executive housekeepers, and maids and housekeeping cleaners—keep office buildings, hospitals, stores, apartment houses, hotels, and other types of buildings clean and in good condition. Some only do cleaning, while others have a wide range of duties. Janitors and cleaners perform a variety of heavy cleaning duties, such as cleaning floors, shampooing rugs, washing walls and glass, and removing rubbish. They may fix leaky faucets, empty trashcans, do painting and carpentry, replenish bathroom supplies, mow lawns, and see that heating and air-conditioning equipment works properly. On a typical day, janitors may wet- or dry-mop floors, clean bathrooms, vacuum carpets, dust furniture, make minor repairs, and exterminate insects and rodents. They also notify management of the need for repairs and clean snow or debris from sidewalks in front of buildings. Maids and housekeeping cleaners perform any combination of light cleaning duties to maintain private households or commercial establishments, such as hotels, restaurants, and hospitals, in a clean and orderly manner. In hotels, aside from cleaning and maintaining the premises, they may deliver ironing boards, cribs, and rollaway beds to guests' rooms. In hospitals, they also may wash bed frames, brush mattresses, make beds, and disinfect and sterilize equipment and supplies using germicides and sterilizing equipment.

Janitors, maids, and cleaners use various equipment, tools, and cleaning materials. For one job, they may need a mop and bucket; for another, an electric polishing machine and a special cleaning solution. Improved building materials, chemical cleaners, and power equipment have made many tasks easier and less time-consuming, but cleaning workers must learn proper use of equipment and cleaners to avoid harming floors, fixtures, and themselves.

Cleaning supervisors coordinate, schedule, and supervise the activities of janitors and cleaners. They assign tasks and inspect building areas to see that work has been done properly, issue supplies and equipment, inventory stocks to ensure an adequate amount of supplies are present, screen and hire job applicants, and recommend promotions, transfers, or dismissals. They also train new and experienced employees. Supervisors may prepare reports concerning room occupancy, hours worked, and department expenses. Some also perform cleaning duties.



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Cleaners and servants in private households dust and polish furniture; sweep, mop, and wax floors; vacuum; and clean ovens, refrigerators, and bathrooms. They also may wash dishes, polish silver, and change and make beds. Some wash, fold, and iron clothes; a few wash windows. General houseworkers also may take clothes and laundry to the cleaners, buy groceries, and do many other errands.

#### Working Conditions

Because most office buildings are cleaned while they are empty, many cleaning workers work evening hours. Some, however, such as school and hospital custodians, work in the daytime. When there is a need for 24-hour maintenance, janitors may be assigned to shifts. Most full-time building cleaners work about 40 hours a week. Part-time cleaners usually work in the evenings and on weekends.

Building cleaning workers in large office and residential buildings often work in teams. These teams consist of workers who specialize in vacuuming, trash pickup, and restroom cleaning, among other things. Supervisors conduct inspections to ensure the building is cleaned properly and the team is functioning efficiently.

Building cleaning workers usually work inside heated, well-lit buildings. However, they sometimes work outdoors sweeping walkways, mowing lawns, or shoveling snow. Working with machines can be noisy, and some tasks, such as cleaning bathrooms and trash rooms, can be dirty and unpleasant. Janitors may suffer cuts, bruises, and burns from machines, handtools, and chemicals. They spend most of their time on their feet, sometimes lifting or pushing heavy furniture or equipment. Many tasks, such as dusting or sweeping, require constant bending, stooping, and stretching. As a result, janitors also may suffer back injuries and sprains.

### Employment

Building cleaning workers held nearly 4.2 million jobs in 2000. Less than 5 percent were self-employed.

Janitors and cleaners work in nearly every type of establishment and held about 2.3 million jobs. They accounted for about 56 percent of all building cleaning workers. About 28 percent worked for firms supplying building maintenance services on a contract basis; 20 percent in educational institutions; and 3 percent in hotels. Other employers included hospitals, restaurants, religious institutions, manufacturing firms, government agencies, and operators of apartment buildings, office buildings, and other types of real estate.

First-line supervisors of housekeeping and janitorial workers held about 219,000 jobs. About 16 percent were employed in hotels; 22 percent in firms supplying building maintenance services on a contract basis; 5 percent in hospitals; and 6 percent in nursing and personal care facilities. Other employers included educational institutions, residential care establishments, and amusement and recreation facilities.

Maids and housekeepers held about 1.6 million jobs. About 25 percent were employed in hotels and other lodging places; 8 percent in hospitals; and 6 percent in nursing and personal care facilities. Other employers included religious organizations and residential care facilities.

Although cleaning jobs can be found in all cities and towns, most are located in highly populated areas where there are many office buildings, schools, apartment houses, and hospitals.

### Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement

No special education is required for most janitorial or cleaning jobs, but beginners should know simple arithmetic and be able to follow instructions. High school shop courses are helpful for jobs involving repair work.

Most building cleaners learn their skills on the job. Usually, beginners work with an experienced cleaner, doing routine cleaning. As they gain more experience, they are assigned more complicated tasks.

In some cities, programs run by unions, government agencies, or employers teach janitorial skills. Students learn how to clean buildings thoroughly and efficiently, how to select and safely use various cleansing agents, and how to operate and maintain machines, such as wet and dry vacuums, buffers, and polishers. Students learn to plan their work, to follow safety and health regulations, to interact positively with people in the buildings they clean, and to work without supervision. Instruction in minor electrical, plumbing, and other repairs also may be given. Those who come in contact with the public should have good communication skills. Employers usually look for dependable, hard-working individuals who are in good health, follow directions well, and get along with other people.

Building cleaners usually find work by answering newspaper advertisements, applying directly to organizations where they would like to work, contacting local labor unions, or contacting State employment service offices.

Advancement opportunities for workers usually are limited in organizations where they are the only maintenance worker. Where there is a large maintenance staff, however, cleaning workers can be promoted to supervisor and to area supervisor or manager. A high school diploma improves the chances for advancement. Some janitors set up their own maintenance business.

Supervisors usually move up through the ranks. In many establishments, they are required to take some in-service training to improve their housekeeping techniques and procedures, and to enhance their supervisory skills.

A small number of cleaning supervisors and managers are members of the International Executive Housekeepers Association (IEHA). IEHA offers two kinds of certification programs to cleaning supervisors and managers—Certified Executive Housekeeper (CEH) and Registered Executive Housekeeper (REH). The CEH designation is offered to those with a high school education, while the REH designation is offered to those who have a 4-year college degree. Both designations are earned by attending courses and passing exams, and must be renewed every 2 years to ensure that workers keep abreast of new cleaning methods. Those with the REH designation usually oversee the cleaning services of hotels, hospitals, casinos, and other large institutions that rely on well-trained experts for their cleaning needs.

### Job Outlook

Overall employment of building cleaning workers is expected to grow about as fast as the average for all occupations through 2010, though job growth will vary depending on where they work. Average growth is expected among both janitors and cleaners and institutional cleaning supervisors, many of whom work in the services to buildings industry. On the other hand, employment of maids and housekeeping cleaners, which includes those in private households, is expected to grow more slowly than the average. In addition to job openings due to growth, numerous openings should result from the need to replace those who leave this very large occupation each year. Limited formal education and training requirements, low pay, and numerous part-time and temporary jobs should contribute to these replacement needs.

To clean the increasing number of office complexes, apartment houses, schools, factories, hospitals, and other buildings, more workers will be assigned to teams with more efficient cleaning equipment and supplies. As many firms reduce costs by hiring independent contractors, businesses providing janitorial and cleaning services on a contract basis are expected to be one of the faster growing employers of these workers.

### Earnings

Median annual earnings of janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners, were \$17,180 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$14,030 and \$22,340. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$12,280, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$29,190. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of janitors and cleaners, except maids and housekeeping cleaners, in 2000 are shown below:

Local government .....	\$22,900
Real estate operators and lessors .....	22,110
Elementary and secondary schools .....	21,100
Colleges and universities .....	20,320
Services to buildings .....	15,370

Median annual earnings of maids and housekeepers were \$15,410 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$13,230 and \$18,030. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$11,910, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$22,200. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of maids and housekeepers in 2000 are shown below:

Hospitals .....	\$16,820
Real estate agents and managers .....	16,500
Nursing and personal care facilities .....	15,460
Services to buildings .....	15,150
Hotels and motels .....	14,760

Median annual earnings of first-line supervisors/managers of housekeeping and janitorial workers were \$25,760 in 2000. The middle 50 percent earned between \$19,920 and \$33,740. The lowest 10 percent earned less than \$16,220, and the highest 10 percent earned more than \$42,850. Median annual earnings in the industries employing the largest numbers of first-line supervisors/managers of housekeeping and janitorial workers in 2000 are shown below:

Elementary and secondary schools .....	\$29,540
Hospitals .....	27,010
Nursing and personal care facilities .....	25,290
Services to buildings .....	23,000
Hotels and motels .....	21,820

### Related Occupations

Workers who specialize in one of the many job functions of janitors and cleaners include pest control workers; industrial machinery installation, repair, and maintenance workers; and grounds maintenance workers.

### Sources of Additional Information

Information about janitorial jobs may be obtained from State employment service offices.

For information on certification in executive housekeeping, contact:

► International Executive Housekeepers Association, Inc., 1001 Eastwind Dr., Suite 301, Westerville, OH 43081-3361. Internet: <http://www.ieha.org>

## Grounds Maintenance Workers

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### Significant Points

- Opportunities, especially for seasonal or part-time work, should be excellent due to significant job turnover.
- Many beginning jobs have low earnings and are physically demanding.
- Most workers learn through short-term on-the-job training.

### Nature of the Work

Attractively designed, healthy, and well-maintained lawns, gardens, and grounds create a positive first impression, establish a peaceful mood, and increase property values. Grounds maintenance workers perform the variety of tasks necessary to achieve a pleasant and functional outdoor environment. They also care for indoor gardens and plantings in commercial and public facilities, such as malls, hotels, and botanical gardens.

The duties of *landscaping workers* and *groundskeeping workers* are similar, and often overlap. Landscaping workers physically install and maintain landscaped areas. They grade property, install lighting or sprinkler systems, and build walkways, terraces, patios, decks, and fountains. In addition to initially transporting and planting new vegetation, they also transplant, mulch, fertilize, and water flowering plants, trees, and shrubs, and mow and water lawns. A growing number of residential and commercial clients, such as managers of office buildings, shopping malls, multiunit residential buildings, and hotels and motels, favor full-service landscape maintenance. Landscaping workers perform a range of duties for such clients on a regular basis during the growing season, including mowing, edging, trimming, fertilizing, dethatching, and mulching.

*Groundskeeping workers*, also called *groundskeepers*, maintain a variety of facilities, including athletic fields, golf courses, cemeteries, university campuses, and parks. In addition to caring for sod, plants, and trees, they also rake and mulch leaves, clear snow from walkways and parking lots, and use irrigation methods to adjust the amount of water consumption and prevent waste. They see to the proper upkeep and repair of sidewalks, parking lots, groundskeeping equipment, pools, fountains, fences, planters, and benches.

Groundskeeping workers who care for athletic fields keep natural and artificial turf fields in top condition and mark out boundaries and paint turf with team logos and names before events. They must make sure that the underlying soil on natural turf fields has the required composition to allow proper drainage and to support the appropriate grasses used on the field. They regularly mow, water, fertilize, and aerate the fields. Groundskeeping workers also vacuum and disinfect synthetic turf after use in order to prevent growth of harmful bacteria, and periodically remove the turf and replace the cushioning pad.

Workers who maintain golf courses are called *greenskeepers*. Greenskeepers do many of the same things that other groundskeepers do. In addition, greenskeepers periodically relocate the holes on putting greens to eliminate uneven wear of the turf and to add interest and challenge to the game. Greenskeepers also keep canopies, benches, ball washers, and tee markers repaired and freshly painted.

Some groundskeeping workers specialize in caring for cemeteries and memorial gardens. They dig graves to specified depths, generally using a backhoe. They may place concrete slabs on the bottom and around the sides of the grave to line it for greater support. When preparing a site for the burial ceremony, they position the casket-lowering device over the grave, cover the immediate area with an artificial grass carpet, erect a canopy, and arrange folding chairs to accommodate mourners. They regularly mow grass, apply fertilizers and other chemicals, prune shrubs and trees, plant flowers, and remove debris from graves. They also must periodically build the ground up around new gravesites to compensate for settling.

Groundskeeping workers in parks and recreation facilities care for lawns, trees, and shrubs, maintain athletic fields and playgrounds, clean buildings, and keep parking lots, picnic areas, and other public spaces free of litter. They also may remove snow and ice from roads and walkways, erect and dismantle snow fences, and maintain swimming pools. These workers inspect buildings and equipment, make needed repairs, and keep everything freshly painted.

Landscaping and groundskeeping workers use handtools such as shovels, rakes, pruning and regular saws, hedge and brush trimmers, and axes, as well as power lawnmowers, chain saws, snowblowers, and electric clippers. Some use equipment such as tractors and twin-axle vehicles. Landscaping and groundskeeping workers at parks, schools, cemeteries, and golf courses may use sod cutters to harvest sod that will be replanted elsewhere.