

Safety Note #32

FLOOR BUFFER SAFETY



According to information available from the Consumers Product Safety Commission, on average more than 375 people per year were treated at hospitals for floor buffer injuries between 1991 and 1995. Injuries included contusions to feet, arms, and hands and strains to backs, necks, hips, wrists, and fingers. Most floor buffer injuries are avoidable and are due to operator inexperience or improper or inattentive operation and handling of floor buffers. California Code of Regulations Title 8, Section 3203 (7) requires employees be trained on the equipment they use in the workplace.

Pre-Use Activities

- Thoroughly review and understand information provided in the floor buffer operator's manual with particular attention given to descriptions of safety procedures.
- Before using, always inspect the floor buffer for damage or disrepair. Inspect the electrical cord and plug for defects.
- If a floor buffer fails the pre-use inspection, notify your supervisor and remove the buffer from service by attaching a red tag that states "DO NOT USE." Complete red tag with appropriate information.

Operating Precautions

- Always insert floor buffer plug into receptacles with similar prong or blade patterns.
- Only use floor cleaners and waxes that are designed for floor buffer application.
- Always use floor buffer cleaners and waxes according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Never use a floor buffer with a damaged electrical cord or plug.
- Always keep both hands on the handles when operating a floor buffer.
- Do not run the floor buffer over electrical cords, door stops, or other obstructions.
- Always unplug an unattended floor buffer.
- Do not yank on the electrical cord to disconnect a floor buffer. Always grip the plug when disconnecting a floor buffer.
- Always unplug the floor buffer before changing the buffing pad or cleaning block.
- Never try to move a floor buffer by pulling on the electrical cord.
- Carefully operate a floor buffer across changes in floor surface texture to prevent strong pulling motions and loss of control of the buffer.
- Cleaning solutions used with a floor buffer may leave wet floor surfaces. Always post signs warning of wet floors near the area being cleaned.
- Use proper techniques to prevent back strain when lifting or moving a floor buffer.
- Always unplug the floor buffer before performing maintenance or repairs.