

School District Learns the Value of Restroom Cleaning Systems

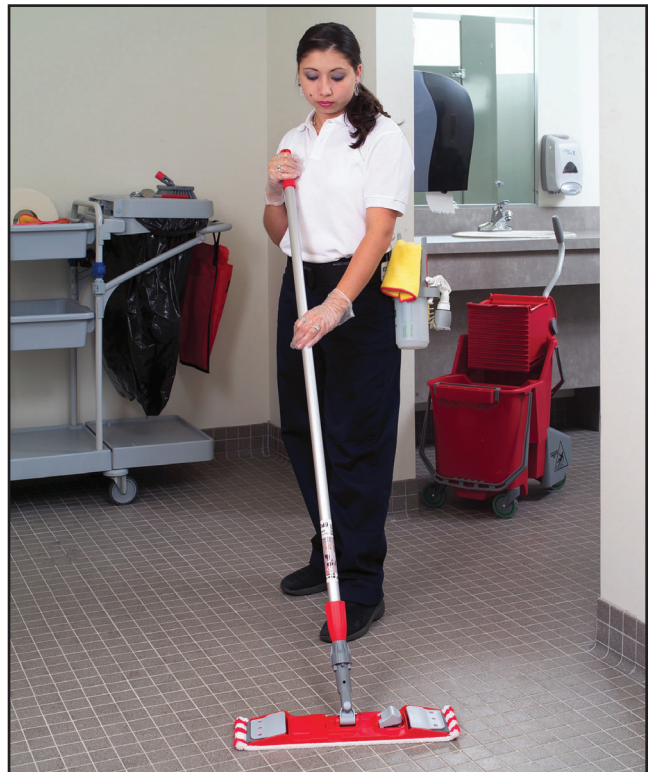
For the 170-person custodial staff at Rockwood School District in Southwest St. Louis County, Mo., daily restroom maintenance in the 3.5 million square foot school district was back breaking and time consuming. With manual cleaning techniques using traditional string mops, rags, sponges and spray bottles, the staff often spent a combined 70 hours each day cleaning the 1200 restroom fixtures spread among the school district's 34 buildings.

"Restrooms are a top priority," said Doug Coleman, custodial coordinator for Rockwood School District. "First and foremost, we clean for the health and safety of our students, but also because our facilities are judged on a daily basis by the appearance, smell and overall cleanliness of the restrooms."

Studies show that 20 percent of students in middle and high school avoid restrooms because they are dirty. Vandalism, unsanitary conditions and poorly stocked restrooms are among the common complaints.



A Custodial Supervisor explains the daily restroom process to a maintenance staff worker.



Unger's Ergonomic tools are designed for worker comfort and are effective for cleaning unusual surfaces that make restroom maintenance so challenging.

To avoid similar issues, the Rockwood School District's cleaning schedule includes thorough daily all-surface and nightly deep cleaning restroom service. Due to the large amounts of water that traditional cleaning tools produce, restrooms are often out of service up to ten minutes after the custodian is finished. According to Coleman, restrooms must often be closed for longer than acceptable periods of time.

Recently however, Coleman, a 2004 member of Cleaning & Maintenance Management's Dream Team, and his staff selected a restroom cleaning system by Unger Enterprises for day shift cleanings and in areas inaccessible to large cleaning machines. Unger's restroom cleaning system divides chores into daily step

by step cleaning tasks, items workers must perform each day, and project cleaning tasks, the less frequent jobs performed on a routine basis. The system includes a variety of ergonomic, color-coded tools such as microfiber cloths, a microfiber flat mop with divided no-lift bucket, a belt-mounted sprayer and other effective cleaning tools that increase user comfort, enhance safety and prevent cross-contamination. By using the Unger restroom cleaning system to keep restrooms cleaner all day, Coleman expects to save 30 seconds of evening shift cleaning time per fixture. This amounts to nearly 10 hours of cleaning time saved per school day.



Unger also offers color coded cleaning tools for sanitation benefits throughout your facility.

Because schools are a haven for germs, restroom cleaning is an extremely important yet challenging chore, Coleman said. The School Network for Absenteeism Prevention reports that 22 million school days are lost annually due to the common cold and other infectious diseases caught through contact with contaminated fixtures and surfaces.

"The microfiber antibacterial technology has been instrumental in improving our cleaning program's sanitation practices," Coleman said. "It gets the job of cleaning and sanitation done with minimal equipment, fewer hazards, less water and chemicals and reduces downtime for our restrooms. Before, our only alternative was to avoid daytime floor cleaning, but germs build too quickly for that."

Coleman also likes the ergonomic tool designs.

Custodians/janitors and cleaning workers are among the most likely to develop work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMDs), according to cleaning industry expert David Frank. Injuries often affect muscles, tendons and nerves in the neck, shoulders, arms, hands and wrists. They are a result of physically demanding lifting, pushing, pulling and other repetitive movements or awkward postures and account for 34 percent of lost workdays.

Ergonomically designed restroom cleaning systems reduce bending and lifting to prevent injury. The microfiber systems can reduce bacteria by 96 percent when compared to traditional cleaning tools. In addition, daily and project process charts can complement such systems to improve training practices.

Until now, Rockwood School District has shared only two restroom cleaning systems among its four high schools, six middle schools, 19 elementary schools and five auxiliary buildings. They plan to acquire 20 to 30 additional Unger systems so each building can house its own.

"Even under strict budgets, the restroom cleaning system is an affordable enhancement to our program," Coleman added. "I know of no other system of tools that can accomplish such high levels of quality within a tightened budget."



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