

No-Touch Cleaning: Cleaning up a Dirty Business

By: Robert Robinson, Sr.



The restroom reeks. She doesn't dare sit. Hovering has become the name of the game. She's thinking, "Why couldn't I have waited until I got home?"

On her way out she sees a sign that says, "If you have any complaints, notify management." And thinks, "you better believe it." Because her husband is the superintendent of the building. And if that was your account, you just lost, big time.

It's the same story everywhere; public restrooms are a disgrace. No matter where you go: airports, movie theaters, restaurants, shopping malls, stadiums, or any other public place. They all have one thing in common, volatile, nasty restrooms. In fact, "the number one building maintenance complaint is dirty, stinking restrooms," according to the 2001 CM in-house survey.

Change is in the Air

But think about it. The tools that most janitorial employees use have been around for the last century: wipers, buckets, mop heads, and a small army of cleaning supplies. They are simply inadequate for today's cleaning challenges. For example, most mop buckets contain dirty, contaminated water; the mop spreads it around, while the wiper cannot get into the nooks and crannies. The result is that only a portion of the soil is removed leaving a "ring around the bathroom," and foul odors.

While most of our society has been technologically advancing, the cleaning industry has been stuck in a rut; but change is in the air.

What is No-Touch Cleaning?

In April of 1997, a new systematic approach to cleaning was developed, called No-Touch cleaning. The goal of No-Touch cleaning is to equip the custodian for effective, multi-purpose cleaning, and most importantly, improve their working conditions. It was designed to be worker friendly, to raise the level of satisfaction on the job.

No-Touch cleaning combines existing technologies in a unique process that quickly sprays cleaning solution on soiled fixtures and floors, then blasts soils to the floor using pressurized water, and finally vacuums the floor dry, removing the soils. The equipment includes three main components: an indoor pressure washer, a wet vacuum system, and chemical proportioning. No-Touch cleaning is more than just equipment; it is a systematic approach to cleaning.



Form follows function with No-Touch cleaning. It is the right tool for the job. Giving people the right tools for the job is like putting a square peg in a square hole, it makes sense.

Well-designed No-Touch cleaning systems allow the operator to make one trip to the janitor's closet, provide easy access to all of the tools, along with good hose control and portability. Earlier versions were carpet extractors retrofitted with spray hoses and guns. The latest developments have built-in features such as: hose wraps, dual chemical use,

lengthy spray lines, (for large restrooms), and chemical and tool holders, just to name a few. The janitor doesn't have to touch anything but the equipment, so he will feel even safer when he has to go in and tackle the filthy restrooms with his No-Touch cleaning equipment.

How it Works

The No-Touch cleaning process consists of simple steps to perform a typical cleaning routine. A dual use pistol-type spray gun first applies a proportioned cleaning solvent to the soiled fixtures and floor. Then with chemicals are turned off, the same gun is used to blast rinse the soils and chemical to the floor, at a water pressure up to 400 PSI. The operator then uses the lightweight floor squeegee head to suck up the solution from the floor, removing soils and moisture



from grout lines, nooks and crannies, leaving the floor virtually dry, clean, and odor free. The mirrors are wiped clean with a window squeegee while the remaining surfaces air dry in minutes, (similar to dishes in a

dish rack). This is a logical, effective and productive cleaning process, often reducing cleaning times by two-thirds or more.

Productivity

According to the ISSA Standard, it takes three minutes or more to clean a restroom fixture. Tests have proven with No-Touch cleaning, you can clean a large men's restroom with: 28 fixtures in 28 minutes, one minute per fixture. That's three times faster than conventional methods.

ISSA Standard method to clean a restroom uses 14 steps, and eight chemicals. No-Touch cleaning machines use six steps, and only one chemical for total restroom cleaning. Not only is it much simpler, but also efficient in time, chemicals and training.

"I would like to comment on the versatility of No-Touch cleaning," said Elmo Haas, Janitor Supervisor III for the Department of General Services, Sacramento, CA. "It revolutionizes restroom cleaning. Our janitors now get the job done more quickly and effectively," he added.

"I have been in the janitorial business for over 12 years," said Ronnie Blackwell of Hollywood Place Casino. "And in those years I have seen systems come and go, but No-Touch cleaning is the most impressive approach that I have encountered."

Soil Removal is the Key

Unlike wipers and mop heads, No-Touch cleaning equipment actually removes soils, versus simply moving them around. The power of the indoor pressure washer flushes out soils, where the wipers and mop heads can't reach. The wet vacuum removes them, leaving clean restroom fixtures and grout lines. You'll be able to eliminate the "five o'clock shadow" of crud that lurks around bathroom baseboards. Chemical proportioning is one of the keys to effective, efficient soil removal. Fewer chemicals are used with No-Touch cleaning than traditional methods.

Because No-Touch cleaning removes soils, restrooms will be a safer place to visit. Soil removal is the key to eliminating odors and kill germs in the restrooms. Soils just happen to be the breeding ground for bacteria. Removing the bacteria also removes the odor that lurks in the restroom as well.

Eventually, the number one building maintenance complaint will no longer be dirty restrooms. "Our restrooms are 100 percent cleaner, along with providing an improved overall appearance," said Blackwell.

Multi-Purpose Savings

No-Touch cleaning equipment can do more than clean restrooms though. Like a tractor, you can use of

multiple attachments to clean a variety of areas: kitchens, stairwells, shower rooms, grout lines, carpets, and classrooms.

The last place the architect thinks of when designing a building is the janitor's closet, this can create a real storage space problem. This is a multi-purpose tool that will save closet space and money by reducing the need for other equipment. Also, having one machine with multiple purposes is going to reduce costs further.

No More Ring Around the Restroom

Many people were skeptical of No-Touch cleaning at first. "It is very different from conventional cleaning methods," says Michael LePay Custodial Services Supervisor for Notre Dame University. "We phased it (No-Touch cleaning) into our daily operations and now everyone is excited about using it." With over 4000 No-Touch cleaning machines throughout the world, No-Touch cleaning is beginning to make an impact on changing the industry.



For the skeptics, try the No-Touch cleaning approach in an already "clean" restroom and see the difference.

In conclusion, even with No-Touch cleaning, the cleaning industry has a long way to go. But at least people are thinking in the right direction, trying to find the way out of the rut. There is hope for clean restrooms in the future, and happy janitorial workers. With No-Touch cleaning everybody wins.

About the Author

Bob Robinson, Sr. is the founder and president of Kaivac, Inc., a manufacturer of industrial cleaning equipment and chemicals based in Hamilton, Ohio. Internationally recognized for delivering innovation and quality, Kaivac, Inc. is the originator of No-Touch Cleaning. According to Robinson, "KaiVac does for the janitor what the bulldozer does for the ditch digger - moves more dirt, in less time, with pride."