



# Enhancing your healthcare environment with cleaning best practices

Cleaning floors in healthcare facilities is about much more than aesthetics – it's about reducing risks and contaminants, and creating an environment that is safe and welcoming.



In addition to contributing to patients' and their families' perception of your facility, good cleaning practices can help manage facility resources and make staff time available for other critical tasks.

These 6 simple questions will help you determine the best way to tackle dirt and grime, keep your building clean, and keep your employees, patients, and visitors safe.

## **ARE YOUR CLEANING METHODS CONDUCTIVE TO HEALING?**

Loud, invasive cleaning methods such as outdated, motorized machines can disrupt patients' care or sleep, and may cause undue stress to nervous patients. Harsh odors from chemicals can contribute to breathing issues in patients with compromised health, as well as the hardworking staff members who breathe them in each day. If your facility aims to return patients to optimal health as quickly as possible, make sure that the way you're cleaning your facility isn't in direct opposition to that goal!

## **IS THERE CARPETING PRESENT IN ANY HIGH-TRAFFIC AREAS?**

You may think vacuuming with your business-level vacuum cleaner is getting the job done, but each square yard of carpeting can accumulate up to a pound of dirt and debris after only a week<sup>1</sup>. Even an industrial vacuum cleaner could leave some of that dirt behind, so look to heavy-duty equipment like carpet extractors to truly get the job done. To ensure you're not creating a damp environment that's hospitable to germs and bacteria, make sure your extractor of choice uses minimal water and offers a drying feature to dry your carpets quickly and completely.

## **ARE YOU WASTING FACILITY RESOURCES?**

Healthcare works best when it eliminates waste – so don't use more water than you need to in your cleaning routines. The median hospital uses 315 gallons of water per bed each day<sup>2</sup> – reducing the amount of water spent on cleaning produces cost savings that can be diverted into more patient-centric services, as well as managing water resources responsibly.

## **DO YOUR CLEANING PRACTICES INCREASE FLOOR SLIP HAZARDS?**

Slick floor coatings, over-use of slippery cleaning chemicals, and water left behind after cleaning can contribute to slip hazards on hard floors. If you aren't using a fast-dry cleaning method for high-traffic hallways and rooms, there's a chance you could also be using too much water, which makes your floors dangerous for longer periods of time. In general use areas, consider floor cleaning methods and technologies that reduce or eliminate slippery conventional chemicals. And last, for the safety of both your staff and patients, use high-traction floor coatings whenever possible.



### ARE YOUR FLOORS TELLING A POSITIVE STORY?

When patients and visitors are greeted with a clean, tidy image of your facility on arrival, they're more at ease, establishing confidence in your facility. Cleaning your floors regularly is about more than simple hygiene; they reflect on your patient focus as a whole. When patient families are touring or visiting, visibly clean floors demonstrate your commitment to them, as well.

### IS YOUR CURRENT CLEANING PROCESS EFFICIENT?

The longer a member of your janitorial staff spends on cleaning common areas, the less time they have for tasks like cleaning patient rooms and other vital maintenance tasks. Invest in products and equipment that reduce cleaning time and make these staff members available for other important tasks. It didn't take long for the benefits to be clear. After programming routes, the T7AMR made passes up and down the hallways on its own after initial set-up by Ryan. It effectively cleaned dirty floors, just like they'd experienced with their manual ride-on machines. If the robotic floor cleaner came across a person or obstacle in its path, it tried to navigate around the obstacle before stopping. In addition, the simple controls eliminated the need for in-depth training — so any cleaning staff, permanent or temporary, were able to run the machine after a quick demonstration.



Much like a patient, your facility should be observed and assessed, “curing” cleanliness issues through smart application of cleaning products and quiet, hardworking appliances. Choosing high-quality cleaning solutions is a goal that has many layers of benefits your patients will appreciate: less noise, fewer slipping hazards, fewer noxious odors, and better task-balancing for your janitorial staff.

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<sup>1</sup>ISSA Cleaning Times. <sup>2</sup>US Environmental Protection Agency Data Trends publication, October 2012.

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