

CLEANING UP

News & Views on Our Industry

A Guide to Improving Safety Through Hard Floor Maintenance

At first blush, a hard floor surface seems safe enough. But get the floor wet or fail to remove all the soapy residue from the floor after cleaning, and suddenly a hard floor surface is inherently dangerous. In fact, according to the National Safety Council, more than eight million people end up in the emergency room every year as a result of accidental falls at a cost to industry of more than \$60 million. While the majority of falls take place at home, more than three million occur in a place of business, a restaurant, a hotel, a school, even a medical facility.

“In order to prevent slips and falls, a business has to have some form of a strategy that deals with the cleaning and maintenance of its floor. It simply cannot put the responsibility on customers or employees by suggesting they watch where they're walking,” said Russ Kendzior, founder of the National Floor Safety Institute (NFSI), an organization that has developed a universal standard for floor safety.

For facility managers, such a strategy should include assessing both the cleaning

process and the tools used to implement that process.

Evaluating the Cleaning Process

A typical hard floor maintenance program consists of daily dust mopping, regularly applying a cleaning solution with some form of agitation, and, maybe, polishing the floor to make it look shiny and clean. The process is pretty much tried and true and there isn't a need to change it as long as it's implemented consistently and effectively.

Consistent cleaning is important because a dirty floor is a potentially unsafe floor with its dirt, sand and other debris effecting floor friction. Effective cleaning is equally important. Using a dirty mop and a bucket of dirty water that at one point had detergent in it really doesn't qualify as effectively applying a cleaning solution with some form of agitation. Not only will the floor remain dirty, but it will likely remain wet and slippery and unsafe.

The good news is that today it's easier than ever to implement an effective hard floor cleaning process thanks to a growing movement toward automation and technology. Many maintenance programs because of the tools used to implement them not only clean the floor but extend the life of that floor and increase safety for those who clean and use the floor.

Assessing the Tools

There are any number of tools that can be used to implement a hard floor maintenance program. And while none are right or wrong (well, perhaps with the exception of the dirty old mop), to stay focused on safety, facility managers might want to pay special attention to four key floor maintenance tools: foam, automated dispensing systems, hygienic recovery

tanks, and automated foam scrubbing system.

One of the latest advancements to emerge in the area of hard floor cleaning is the use of foam as opposed to liquid detergent. Foam created by injecting air into a water and detergent mixture dramatically reduces the amount of water used to create the cleaning solution. Because less water is used foam is less slippery than traditional cleaning agents. And with less water and no messy detergent, foam also won't migrate or spatter. As a result, foam is, by its very nature, a safer choice for obtaining cleaner and drier floors.

Automated chemical dilution and proportioning systems weed out less effective and less safe dispensing methods. Because they ensure that the proper amount of chemical is used on the floor, automated dispensing systems prevent those sticky or slippery floors that too much detergent can cause. In addition to creating a safer floor surface, automated dispensing systems provide for safer chemical handling by equipment operators as those operators no longer need to come in contact with the chemical.

Hygienic tanks allow users to quickly and easily access and sanitize the recovery and solution tanks on automated scrubbers. Cleaning the recovery tanks eliminates mold, bacteria and other contaminants that can grow in enclosed tanks. Not only is a facility's hygiene greatly improved, but the water being used is cleaner and safer.

There is a system available to facility managers today that marries automated chemical dispensing with the use of a foam cleansing agent. The patented cleaning system integrates foam technology with

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Monkey Pads*
- 4** New Product
Compact Washer

*Special Combo
Compact Washer & PCS MicroLaundry*



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scrubbing automation.

Through an onboard chemical dispensing system, the exact and appropriate amount of pre-measured chemical-to-water dilution is dispensed. Air is injected into the solution to create foam, and the automated scrubber delivers the foam to the floor surface. Because it uses less water and less detergent than conventional automated cleaning systems, the system provides a floor that is both cleaner and safer. The real kicker is that models are available with hygienic tanks, too.

Ruth Timmer, Manager of Environmental Services at Centegra Health System in Chicago, needed to maintain the safety and cleanliness of a crowded hospital that was caring for patients around the clock. She has had impressive results using this patented cleaning system. "The automated foam scrubbing system provides consistent cleaning results and, best of all, helps assure the safety of the medical staff and hospital visitors," she said. "We're now able to safely scrub when more doctors and nurses are on the floor because the floor dries fast, reducing the number of slip and fall injuries."

Certifying Safety

Safety is no longer just a water cooler topic among facility managers, building owners and housekeeping professionals. A few years ago, Russ Kendzior's NFSI introduced a product certification program designed to help curb the growing number of slip-and-fall accidents and fatalities in commercial settings. Through the program, NFSI certifies floor coverings, floor polishes, floor cleaning

chemicals, and automated cleaning systems as "High-Traction." The certification means the products offer a significant benefit in the area of slip and fall prevention and provide a higher floor slip resistance value under wet conditions.

As more cleaning equipment and products are certified, companies have better opportunities to improve safety. And experts say it will save them money, not only in reduced claims, but, in some cases, in lower insurance rates.

"The insurance industry will likely never require companies to use certified products to clean their floors, but they certainly might recommend it," said Jeff Skog, president of Fourth Shift Consulting, a company that provides workplace safety, loss control, and risk management services. "It's also possible that the insurance industry could start offering some type of premium rate reduction or incentive to companies that do use certified products and are able to show a clear reduction in slips and falls."

With new and evolving tools and technologies at facility managers' disposal, there's no time like the present to implement a floor maintenance program that not only elevates cleanliness, but safety too.

Thank you to Tennant Company for supplying this article.



BEAT THE SNOW IN STORE

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Lease: \$115.00 / month*

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Lease: \$195.00 / month*

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For more information on these and other products, contact your local Wesclean branch at 1-888-337-2929 or visit www.wesclean.com

Wesclean Tip: Cleaning Microfibre Cloths

Microfibre cloths reduce environmental surface contamination. At the same time, microfibre is designed to grab and hold soil and germs. We now know that regular laundering with traditional detergents leaves residue in the microfibre even after the laundering process. PCS offers two methods of conditioning microfibre cloths that overcomes latent residue and restores microfibre to their original efficiency:

Manual Wash:

This process conditions microfibre cloths using PCS MicroLaundry and warm water:

1. Rinse the cloths to remove loosened soils
2. Place the cloths in a bucket and add 60 mls / gallon of PCS MicroLaundry.
Leave at least 2 minutes
3. Fill the bucket with water
4. Wring the cloths out at least twice to release soil
5. Empty the bucket and refill it with warm water
7. Rinse the cloths in the bucket and then empty the bucket
8. Repeat as necessary



Machine Wash:

Launder microfibre cloths using PCS MicroLaundry, which contains no synthetic chemicals or detergent surfactants. Place the cloths in washing machine and add 60mls / gallon of PCS MicroLaundry. Using PCS MicroLaundry removes accumulated soils without depositing synthetic chemicals/ surfactants that can reduce the ability of the microfibre cleaning cloths to remove and release organic soils.

**Need more cleaning tips and ideas?
Log on to www.wesclean.com and visit the "Resources" section.**

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For more information on these and other products, contact your Wesclean/Evershine specialist at 1-800-451-1533 or visit www.evershine.info.

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***Use with PCS MicroLaundry**

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