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## News



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### Is Noise a Cleaning Issue?

Noise is becoming a serious problem, according to Bob Robinson Sr, president of Kaivac, Inc. and ISSA Board Member.

As the world's population grows, adding more cars, electronic gadgets, and other sound sources, concerns about noise are increasing. In the Jan/San industry, as facility service providers (FSPs) continue to mechanize their cleaning tasks--to improve productivity and efficiency--noise concerns are mounting as well.

The World Health Organization (WHO) claims, "Noise-induced hearing impairment has become the most prevalent and irreversible

occupational hazard worldwide, an estimated 120 million people having disabling hearing difficulties."

### **The Sinister Effects of Noise**

Noise is considered "unwanted sound" with all sounds given a decibel (dB) rating. A whisper at 3 feet is about 30 dB; a busy freeway at 50 feet is approximately 80 dB.

A vacuum cleaner can have a decibel rating of 70 dB or higher. This is not only unpleasant, but when workers are exposed to it for hours at a time, it can be harmful.

And, studies have found that prolonged exposure to noise at 70 dB and above can result in hearing loss and a persistent ringing sound in the ears.

"Noise has a sinister effect in that the more exposure a person has to it, the more hearing loss continues," says Josara Wallber, National Technical Institute of the Deaf, "and hearing loss is irreversible."

### **The Mayo Clinic has a Noisy Surprise**

Although a growing number of medical professionals are concerned about noise pollution, one of the noisiest places of all turns out to be clinics and hospitals. The American Journal of Nursing reports that peak noise levels at the world-famous Mayo Clinic rivaled the sound of a jackhammer.

Their study found many hospitals are among the noisiest public locations--even though peace and quiet are essential in a healing environment. Most of the noise, the study reported, was from talking, loud PA systems, and building maintenance operations.

Robinson says this is why he believes noise pollution should be considered a Green issue and it is why Kaivac has added it to the Kaivac Green Position Paper, to be introduced later this year.

"As the Jan/San industry embraces Green Cleaning--reducing cleaning's impact on the environment--I believe more manufacturers will follow our lead. They will begin lowering the noise levels of their cleaning equipment to protect the health of the cleaning worker and the environment," says Robinson.

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