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Survey Looks Into Understanding of "Effective Cleaning"

By CleanLink Editorial Staff

A recent survey asked approximately 1,600 facility managers, jan/san distributors, and building service providers a variety of questions regarding effective cleaning and the potential health risks associated with germs and bacteria found on surface areas.

The survey was conducted in mid-May 2007 by Kaivac, Inc.. Of the 1,600 people invited to take the survey, 270 responded.*

According to the survey, when asked where most of the e-coli and other forms of bacteria are located in a public restroom, 43 percent indicated it is on the floor, which is correct, 20 percent the toilet seat, and 37 percent the restroom sink. They also said that the best way to determine if a restroom is "truly clean and sanitary" is to use a device that can indicate and measure the presence of germs and bacteria.

However, 58 percent reported they are unaware of any such device other than using an ultra-violet or black light, which can only detect but not measure, the presence of bacteria. However, at the recent CIRI Symposium in Las Vegas, it was announced that such equipment has been developed and will be available soon.

Among the other findings:

- Fifty percent believed that not all surface-area germs and bacteria are potentially unhealthy, "but if present, they can lead to illness and disease."
- When asked how many school days are lost because of illnesses caused by germs, viruses, and bacteria, the majority, 35 percent, said about 50 million. According to NSF International, a public health and safety company, more than



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160 million school days are missed each year that could be greatly reduced with proper hand washing and more effective cleaning.

- Questioned as to the most effective way to remove and eliminate soils and bacteria from floors, 3 percent responded using microfiber mopheads; 4 percent said using a combination of dual-buckets and microfiber mopheads, 79 percent said the best system was to use no-touch or spray-and-vac cleaning equipment.

Other questions dealt specifically with the transfer of potentially health risking germs and bacteria.

For instance, when asked, true or false, if the presence of germs and bacteria on floor surfaces was safe as long as children and adults don't actually "touch" the floor, 88 percent indicated it was false, which is correct. Recent studies report that bacteria and germs found on floor surfaces find their ways on to people's hands once they remove their shoes or pick up a purse lying on the floor.

* 134 started the survey but did not answer all questions: 136 answered all questions. The survey has a confidence rating of 95 percent. This means that even if a larger number of people took the survey, the responses would be the same, plus or minus 5 percentage points.

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