

Guest Columnist

Medical Facilities Redefine Cleaning

By

Oct 16, 2009 - 2:45:40 PM



(HealthNewsDigest.com) - If you asked the average lay person what do custodial workers and housekeepers do, they would like answer they take out the trash, vacuum the carpets, and sweep the floors. However, the role of cleaning workers and the professional cleaning industry has evolved considerably in the past decade, and most specifically in the past few years. Historically, cleaning has been tied to aesthetics. A clean facility, especially a medical facility, simply looks better than an unkempt building. And for a medical facility, a clean, well-maintained facility ensures confidence in patients and their families that they will be well cared for in this facility and by its staff. However, although the general public may not be fully

aware of it, more and more healthcare administrators now realize proper cleaning plays a far more important role than “just keeping up appearances.” It helps keep people and facilities healthy. One reason medical staff are so aware of this is due to the recent public health concerns such as the SARS epidemic a few years back, MRSA, noscomial infections, and most recently H1N1. Because the role of cleaning and cleaning professionals is changing, and changing rapidly in the 21st century, it’s probably time we redefine cleaning, not only in medical but in all types of facilities. Below are the five cornerstones of cleaning in order of importance. These points are designed to help educate healthcare administrators as well as laypeople• and in some cases, cleaning professionals as well• as to what cleaning is all about:

Protect Human Health: The 2003 SARS epidemic in Hong Kong was one of the first real wake-up calls regarding the importance of cleaning and its connection to health. Initially, public health officials were unsure how to treat the disease and prevent its spread. One of the first and most important steps taken was to ramp up cleaning procedures throughout the country. It was later discovered that some of the germs and bacteria causing SARS could be found on high-touch areas such as elevator buttons, light switches, ledges, door knobs, and so on. Thoroughly cleaning these surfaces was a first step in controlling the spread of the disease and solidifying the importance of cleaning in protecting human health.

Enhance the Appearance of Facilities: As mentioned earlier, visitors view the appearance of a medical facility as an indication of how well run and the type of care they can expect in this facility. In medical as well as all types of buildings, how clean and well-maintained the location is is almost always a reflection of the organization inside. Whether a visitor to a hotel, a tenant seeking an office, or a patient visiting a doctor for medical attention, their decision to use this facility or do business within the building is affected by its appearance. Clean and well-maintained facilities instill confidence, invite people back, and help develop trust.

Promote Safety and Reduce Risk: Studies by the National Safety Council (NSC) have estimated that 15 percent of the approximately 4 million disabling workplace injuries each year are due to slips, trips, or falls. These accidents account for about 15 percent of all workers’ compensation costs, which averages about \$28,000 per case. NSC also reports that fully half of all slip-related accidents occur because of unclean floors. Cleaning professionals can help reduce these numbers and enhance the

overall safety of the facility. **Protect the Environment:** Conventional cleaning chemicals and products can have an adverse impact on the environment. However, in the past few years, the professional cleaning industry has gone Green. Cleaning products, tools, and equipment have been introduced that help reduce cleaning's impact on the environment. Many cleaning professionals are taking this a step further and helping managers and property owners Green other aspects of their facilities' operation so that their overall environmental footprint is reduced. **Protect and Preserve Assets:** The big danger to granite and marble floors is dust and dirt walked in by building occupants. Carpet soiling is common in all facilities, but if not attended to quickly by cleaning professionals it can become permanent. Cleaning helps protect and preserve building assets, whereas minimizing cleaning typically leads to higher costs down the road as floors, carpets, and other surfaces must be replaced due to neglect. Cleaning not only protects but also increases the life span of building assets. Mike Schaffer has been involved in the professional cleaning industry for more than 25 years. Starting out as a distributor salesperson, he is now President of Tornado Industries, a leading manufacturer of professional cleaning tools and equipment based in Chicago. www.alturasolutions.com Subscribe to our FREE Ezine and be eligible for Health News, discounted products/services and coupons related to your Health. We publish 24/7. HealthNewsDigest.com We videotape Press Conferences, produce SMT's, VNR's, B-rolls, PSA's, - all with distribution: HealthyTelevisionProductions

© Copyright by HealthNewsDigest.com