



# The Link

## Why Are We Still Mopping Floors?

By Stephen Hanig

Numerous studies, some dating back to the early 1970s, indicate that the traditional mopping of floors is ineffective at best and may even be the source of increased soiling and contamination. The reason is obvious to facility managers and cleaning professionals well versed in floorcare, especially tile and grout flooring. As the mop is used, it gathers grit, soils, and contaminants, many of which are spread over the floor area in the cleaning process instead of being removed.

This can be true whether using conventional string or “spaghetti” mops or flat mops made of microfiber. Additionally, technologies developed to help prevent this spreading of soils from occurring over the floor area, such as dual-bucket systems that separate solution and rinse water, have proved to be relatively ineffective. This is because the mop head becomes soiled as soon as it touches the floor—even sooner if the bucket itself is contaminated.

This problem becomes all the more evident when cleaning tile and grout flooring commonly found in restrooms in public facilities as well as locker rooms, shower areas, and foodservice areas. These floors are porous. Time, moisture, contaminants, and soiled mop heads and mop water will eventually discolor the tile and grout, causing staining and odors and fostering the growth of bacteria, mold, and mildew.

When this happens, addressing the problem can not only be a time-consuming process but can even risk the health of the cleaning professional as well as the environment. Often the cleaning worker uses hand-held brushes to loosen grit and soil from the tile and grout, manually going over each section, which for a large area is a slow and laborious process.

Also, cleaning workers may turn to powerful acid-type cleaners and degreasers. These products may well remove the grit and soiling, but the fumes they release can be harmful, and skin and eye irritation—a common work-related injury among cleaning professionals—can be serious.

## New Technologies Provide a Solution

Many facilities are turning to hard-surface cleaning equipment as an alternative to

## WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

We would love to hear what you think. Tell us what you like and what you don't...what you would like to see more of and what you'd like to see less of. Email your thoughts to the LINK editor at [TheLink@kcc.com](mailto:TheLink@kcc.com).

## TOOL BOX

[Swine/Avian Flu Information](#)

[Distributor Locator](#)

[Towel Cost Calculator](#)

[Select The Right Wiper](#)

[Handwashing Guidelines](#)

[KLEENGUARD\\* Virtual Model](#)

[KLEENGUARD\\* Brand Safety KnowledgeNetwork\\*](#)

[Clean Hands Save Lives!](#)

conventional floor mopping. Typically, this equipment is used to clean tile and grout flooring because it is able to deep clean porous floors and remove and dispose of contaminants down the drain rather than moving them from place to place.

For instance, some carpet extractor-type “dual surface” machines use a turbo, hard-surface floor cleaner attachment that pressure washes hard surfaces while removing waste water with a powerful vacuum system in one cleaning pass. These machines can use up to two gallons of water per minute with an adjustable 400 to 1,200 psi (pounds per square inch). This system allows the operator to adjust the machine’s pressure based on floor type and cleaning needs. Using the system, the operator first pre-sprays the floor with a cleaning chemical to loosen soils, then pressure washes and safely removes waste in one cleaning pass. Because the equipment is connected directly to water-feed outlets, it cleans the floor and then “dumps” solution and contaminants down the drain at the rate of 5.5 gallons per minute, aiding in productivity.

These are other benefits of this type of floor cleaning technology:

- Pre-spraying floors tends to limit the amount of chemical used for cleaning, making the process more environmentally responsible.
- Because this is a “one-pass system,” floors are cleaned and rinsed faster, enhancing worker productivity.
- Floors dry quickly because the moisture is extracted, unblocking floor areas sooner and preventing possible slips and falls.

### **Answering the Big Question**

If we have known for more than 40 years that conventional mopping systems can actually spread soils on floor surfaces, why are we still using them? For years, cleaning professionals and facility managers believed mopping effectiveness could be improved by simply using more powerful chemicals and switching to dual or separate bucket systems. Both ideas, we now know, have drawbacks.

Additionally, when the cost of labor was less, if cleaning workers had to take more time to manually brush floors to remove soiling, it did not impact the cleaning budget as much as it does today. Now, with cleaning budgets under greater scrutiny and often cut, this simply is no longer an option.

But the most likely reason cleaning workers continue using traditional mopping methods is simply that a better technology was not invented until recently. In this case, a variation of the famous quote holds true for floorcare: the necessity to clean floors more thoroughly and effectively was the mother of invention.

*Stephen Hanig is Vice President of Sales and Marketing for [U.S. Products](#) and [HydraMaster](#), both manufacturers of professional carpet, floor, and restoration cleaning equipment.*

### QUICK LINKS

[Kimberly-Clark Corporation](#)

[Kimberly-Clark Safety Business](#)

[Kimberly-Clark Health Care](#)

[ISSA](#)

[IFMA](#)

[WYPALL\\* Wipers Crew Chief Challenge](#)

[Kimberly-Clark Filtration Products - IAQ Information](#)

Questions or comments should be directed to the [Contact Us](#) page at [kcprofessional.com](http://kcprofessional.com).

Your visit to this site and use of the information herein is subject to the terms of our [legal statement](#).

Please review our [Privacy Policy](#).

For more information about other great Kimberly-Clark brands, visit our [kcprofessional.com](http://kcprofessional.com) website.

If you no longer wish to receive mailings from KIMBERLY-CLARK PROFESSIONAL\*, click here.

®/\* Trademarks of Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. or its affiliates. Marques déposées de Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. ou de ses filiales. ©2010 KCWW

Published by [KIMBERLY-CLARK PROFESSIONAL\\*](#)

Copyright © 2009 Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. All rights reserved.

All names, logos and trademarks are the property of Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc. or its affiliates. Your visit to this site and use of the information herein is subject to the terms of our Legal Statement. Please review our Privacy Policy.