

Unger Cleaning Systems Improve University Efficiency

The complete restroom system helps UMASS staff clean faster and more efficiently.

The University of Massachusetts-Amherst Southwest Residential Housing Area is a collection of 16 residence halls, five of which being 22-story towers, that house a total of 5200 students a year. Here, Senior Operations Manager Gaye Reinhold was looking for new ways to improve sanitation while reducing the amount of water used for cleaning restrooms and other areas of the residence halls.

In order to reduce water and improve sanitation, Reinhold concentrated on two primary tools used by the cleaning staff: single compartment buckets and string mops. "Because the buckets only had a single compartment, cleaning staff had to frequently empty the dirty water and refill it with clean solution," Reinhold says. "This not only meant more water was needed for cleaning, but it took longer for rooms to be cleaned."

The string mops brought another set of issues. Workers would sometimes injure themselves when lifting the heavy mops and maneuvering them



Unger's Restroom Cleaning products allow worker's to clean more efficiently with less physical strain.

across the floors. In addition, the mops created the potential for slip and fall accidents since workers weren't wringing them out completely, leaving excess water to collect on the floor. Both tools increased the threat of cross-contamination, as the string mops were placed back into dirty water which would then be re-distributed onto the floor.

Reinhold realized she needed to re-educate the cleaning staff to see that rooms could still be cleaned without using large amounts of water. To do this, she decided to phase out the string mops and the single-compartment buckets. At a cleaning seminar put on by local vendors, Reinhold learned about Unger Enterprises' line of cleaning tools, including its dual-compartment buckets and microfiber flat mop system.

"My staff and I are always looking for new ways to improve sanitation," Reinhold says. "I attended a cleaning seminar that re-enforced my desire to switch to dual-compartment buckets. It also helped me see how Unger's products can benefit our entire cleaning program."

Reinhold was also impressed that Unger's cleaning system could be customized to each facility's needs. This would give Reinhold the freedom to design her own cleaning kits. Reinhold also decided to replace a large portion of other cleaning tools, including flat mops, brushes, scrapers, squeegees and microfiber cleaning cloths. Over a period of two and a half years, Reinhold replaced close to 1,000 tools with Unger products.

New System Improves Efficiency, Reduces Strain on Body

Following the system's rollout phase that included trials and employee training/education, members of the cleaning staff, some who had been using singlecompartment buckets for more than 20 years,

soon began to experience the benefits of the new cleaning system. The dual-compartment buckets and flat mops resulted in less fatigue and bending. The ergonomic design also made the mops easier to lift and maneuver.

After about a year and a half of using the dual-compartment buckets and flat mops, Reinhold decided to replace a large percentage of cleaning tools with Unger products. Reinhold's team now uses 90 sets of Unger cleaning tools that include microfiber wipes, telescopic poles, SmartColor mops and ErgoTec Safety Scrapers.

Integration and assessment of the new products has been continuous with the last tools being implemented just six months ago. Because the products are used throughout the residence halls in all public areas, including restrooms, hallways and common areas, staff were trained to follow Unger's color-coding guidelines to help reduce cross-contamination. Reinhold is pleased to report that staff has embraced this system and now uses red tools in the restroom and blue tools in the common areas.

Reinhold has also noticed significant improvements in cleaning and employee morale. Staff members report that the new tools offer finer cleaning, require fewer touch-ups and make it easier to clean corners. "These products have also been a great help in our quest to conserve water," Reinhold adds. "And there is less build-up and cleaner grout lines. However, the best improvement is that my staff is cleaning more efficiently as they are finding themselves free to take on extra tasks that previously could not be completed."

Those tasks include sprucing up the lounge areas and keeping the restrooms not just clean, but neat and tidy. Tasks that used to take 45 minutes are being completed in less time, allowing cleaning staff to return to a hallway or other area they may have had to skip over in the past.

Reinhold has also noticed that her staff has more energy and fewer injuries caused by bending or lifting heavy products. That's because these tools are ergonomically designed and keep cleaning staff from becoming fatigued. Reinhold has also seen cost savings from making the switch. "Our workers'

compensation costs have been reduced since staff members don't have to stand on shaky ladders, but can clean using the telescopic poles," Reinhold says. "Also, I've saved about 10 to 15 percent off the cost of cleaning supplies, as these are more durable than our old products."

Due to the successful implementation of the Unger products in the Southwest Residential Area, other campus departments are looking to use these products as well. Reinhold also says she would purchase more of the products so long as they continue to improve worker efficiency and enhance building sanitation. "Those of us in Maintenance and Operations at UMass have a mission to provide students with residence halls that are clean, safe and well-maintained," Reinhold says. "Unger's products have helped the cleaning staff do just that by allowing them to do their job more efficiently and with less strain on their bodies. These products have made our operations smoother, and I strongly recommend them for other universities."



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