



# Insights & best practices for healthcare facility cleaning

## Cleaning with fewer chemicals

Practicing sustainable everyday cleaning is an increasingly important goal for your organization and a vital aspect of your job performance. In addition to using fewer chemicals, generating less waste and using less water and energy, by cleaning more sustainably you can reduce costs, improve indoor air quality and enhance safety.

### 1. Scrub floors with fewer chemicals

Chemical-free floor scrubbing leverages an innovative technology that electrically converts water into a cleaning solution that cleans effectively, improves floor traction and safety, and reduces environmental impact. And it can save you money by reducing the cost of training, purchasing, storing and handling of chemicals – while also using up to 70% less water than conventional methods.

### 2. Coat floors while minimizing odors and waste

Advanced low volatile organic compound (VOC) floor coating systems can replace floor strippers and finishes that contain heavy metals. These coatings are not susceptible to hand sanitizer spills, and reduce labor costs by eliminating burnishing. Other floor coating systems can cure instantly through exposure to UV light, so they won't emit noxious fumes that can affect patients, staff and visitors. As more businesses leverage a new wave of practical, modernized floor cleaning technologies, they're not just reducing cleaning time and labor costs – they're also gaining more: more powerful cleaning capabilities, more reliable cleaning performance, and more satisfied customers and employees.

**“Using better quality equipment with good filtration systems eliminates dust issues. And chemical-free stripping and refinishing saves time and enables us to get into patient care areas without having a chemical smell.”**

**John Rota**

*Director, Environmental Services*





# Selecting the right equipment for the job and your staff

Cleanliness has always been essential in healthcare, but today, the confluence of rising risks, rising expectations and rising standards make the cleanliness of spaces and surfaces more critical than ever for healthcare organizations.

Labor has long been one of the biggest expenses in most businesses, accounting for 75-80 percent of most janitorial budgets<sup>1</sup>. But while labor pressure is nothing new to most businesses, these pressures are seeing acute increases. The cost to hire, train and keep employees is higher than ever – and it keeps going up.

Choosing the right equipment for the job and finding ways to boost productivity can be daunting; it's no surprise EVS directors and facility managers are deploying tools and technologies to help employees complete cleaning tasks more effectively to not only ensure consistent cleaning, but can contribute to employee satisfaction.

## 1. Automate the large spaces

Practical and powerful robotic floor cleaning machines are enabling some of the most innovative cleaning operations to leave the frequent, methodical floor scrubbing to the robots – freeing up more time for staff to focus on tasks only humans can do, such as wipe-downs, disinfection, and other higher-touch cleaning tasks. These robotic floor cleaning machines ensure cleaning consistency while allowing cleaning teams to increase cleaning frequency and expand cleaning protocols – without increasing labor costs.

Rather than displacing cleaners, intelligent leaders are using robotics to work alongside staff – leaving the professional cleaners to do the high-value tasks only humans can do.

Implementing robotics is one strategy [leading healthcare facilities](#) are using to improve engagement and up-skilling their staff while also achieving higher standards of clean. In addition, autonomous mobile robots (AMRs) are revolutionizing cleaning and how facilities can meet rising expectations and cost pressures.

## 2. Mechanize the smaller spaces

Let's be real: No one wants to see a dirty mop and bucket. The traditional mop and bucket was once the go-to for cleaning in smaller spaces. But like everything, evolution, and transformation comes into play.

Smaller, lightweight mechanized scrubbers help custodial staff clean faster, easier, and better in tight spaces than a traditional mop. They can be maneuvered efficiently around obstacles to ensure the floor is clean. Modern, lightweight and easy-to-use mechanized floor cleaning equipment can drive rapid increases in employee satisfaction and cleaning performance.

Advanced technologies are easier to deploy and use than ever, making implementation of these tools a much lighter lift – and a practical, quick-win strategy for cleaning operations of all sizes and types.

<sup>1</sup> Tong, J. (2020, November 10). Calculating Janitorial Labor. CleanLink. <https://www.cleanlink.com/cp/article/CalculatingJanitorialLabor--26255>



## Improving indoor air quality

Many patients across the healthcare spectrum have heightened susceptibility to infections, respiratory problems and other health issues associated with air contaminants. By improving indoor air quality through better cleaning equipment and practices, you can enhance the health of your patients and employees.

### 1. Use HEPA filtration to reduce air contaminants

High efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters on vacuums help control the levels of airborne particles – including those associated with allergens. Lower-quality filters don't capture the smallest of these particles, so vacuuming can stir them up and degrade air quality.

### 2. Dry carpets faster and reduce mold potential

Advances in microfiber technology used in carpet cleaning result in rapid drying that cleans while leaving up to 90% less water in the carpet compared to deep extraction. This allows you to reduce the potential for mold and odors.

### 3. Minimize cleaning chemical smells

Chemical-free floor scrubbing reduces floor cleaning chemical smells and helps create a safer environment for patients, employees and visitors – especially with today's growing population of asthmatics.

one square yard of  
**carpet**  
can harbor  
one pound  
**of dirt**  
each week



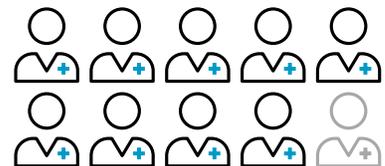
[cleancountry.com](http://cleancountry.com)

## Safer floors & fewer slips

Patients, staff and visitors expect healthcare facilities to be clean and safe, and ensuring their safety is among your most important responsibilities. Reducing cleaning-related hazards – including slippery floors, poor indoor air quality, and the handling and mixing of chemicals – will help you minimize accidents and meet your safety goals.

### 1. Use high-traction floor coatings

Using floor coatings and cleaning products that are certified by the NFSI as "high traction" can reduce the risk of slip-and-fall accidents. For the safest floors possible, combine NFSI-certified chemical-free scrubbing technology with NFSI-certified coatings. These coatings also make floors easier to clean by increasing durability and chemical resistance, and decreasing dust, dirt and liquid buildup.



Hospitals average a  
**90% higher rate**

of lost-workday injuries due to slips, trips and falls than all other industries combined

*U.S. Department of Health and Human Services*



## 2. Try chemical-free floor scrubbing and finish removal

Improperly diluted chemicals used in floor scrubbing machines can leave a slippery residue, increasing the risk of slip-and-fall accidents. Explore chemical-free technologies that leave no residue and actually remove built-up chemical residue.

And, look for chemical-free orbital scrubbing floor finish removal that minimizes airborne chemicals and reduces the risk of chemical-splash accidents.

## Enhancing HCAHPS scores

The HCAHPS survey measures patient satisfaction across 27 categories, including cleanliness and noise – and can offer valuable insights into where you need to improve your team’s performance. Because patient and staff perceptions can differ greatly, it’s helpful to think like a patient and navigate your facility with a critical eye – starting with walking through the front door.

### 1. Use quality floor scrubbers to make a great impression

People often look down as they walk through hospitals, so the floor has a huge impact on perceptions of cleanliness. Plus, excessive cleaning noise can create stress in patients, potentially affecting healing. But today’s floor scrubbers are quieter and may even feature chemical-free cleaning, so floors can be cleaned day or night without excessive noise or chemical smells that can affect patient satisfaction.

### 2. Improve your carpet’s appearance and reduce odors

Look for the new, rapid-drying carpet cleaning system featuring microfiber technology that uses less water and leaves up to 90 percent less water in the carpet, compared to deep extraction. Faster drying means quicker turnaround times and allows for more frequent interim carpet cleaning that can improve your facility’s appearance and reduce odors.

**“Quiet auto-scrubbers and vacuums affect noise levels. Maintaining cleanliness and keeping the hospital quiet sends the message that the staff cares.”**

Larry Garrone  
*Director, Environmental Services*

The average hospital uses  
**139,000 gallons**  
of water per day with  
  
**10%** devoted to cleaning

*Southwest Florida Water Management District*



## Protect your brand image

Healthcare facilities have always needed to be clean in order to fulfill their missions. But today, your facility also needs to be perceived as clean by patients and visitors – which makes it tough to find the right balance between not being seen enough while cleaning, and being seen too much. Innovative solutions are available to help improve the cleanliness of your facilities, and help them look and feel clean as well.

### 1. Sweep outdoor surfaces for immediate impact

Visitors notice sand, litter and other debris present on your facility's sidewalk or parking ramp. Using sweepers to clean these exterior surfaces improves perceptions of cleanliness, and helps reduce the amount of dirt tracked into your buildings.

### 2. Use innovative floor scrubbers to clean more frequently

Choose high-performance walk-behind scrubbers that allow congested spaces, including patient rooms, to be cleaned more frequently. They also clean much better than traditional mops and dirty buckets, and help you project a high-tech image.

### 3. Clean and dry carpets quickly – even in front of guests!

Rapid-drying carpet cleaning equipment with microfiber technology enables more frequent interim carpet cleaning with minimal disruption. These quieter machines dry carpets in 30 minutes or less, and allow cleaning to be performed while patients and visitors are present – making the perception of a clean facility a reality.

**“First impressions last, and an orderly, uncluttered space helps project a clean appearance. Patient and employee satisfaction are enhanced in a clean environment with polished floors.”**

Robert Stein  
Regional Manager

## Sweeping

exterior spaces can  
reduce incoming soil by

**66%**



[hfmmagazine.com](http://hfmmagazine.com)

## Questions? Call a Tennant expert.

Contact a Tennant specialist today to learn more about the innovative cleaning solutions available that allow healthcare facilities like yours to:

- Reduce chemical use
- Minimize water, energy and packaging waste
- Improve indoor air quality
- Increase worker safety
- Enhance the patient experience
- Create a more positive organizational image

**800.964.9644**  
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