

BUYER'S GUIDE 2006

PASS THE CLEAN TEST WITH CUSTOMERS

How important is restroom cleaning to your bottom line? | Ben Bugajewski



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One of the most common complaints from customers is the appearance level of the restrooms. If restrooms are clean, it shows that the retailer cares about its customers.

in a retail store environment.)

It takes a lot of training and reinforcement of the training to get “clean results.”

As a retailer, if you do not maintain a program to keep your restrooms clean, you will have 64% of consumers leave your store immediately without purchasing anything if they visit a soiled restroom. An estimated 17% stated they would purchase some items during the visit but not return to shop there again if the store was not clean.

I have had many retail executives ask me the following three questions when discussing restroom cleaning programs.

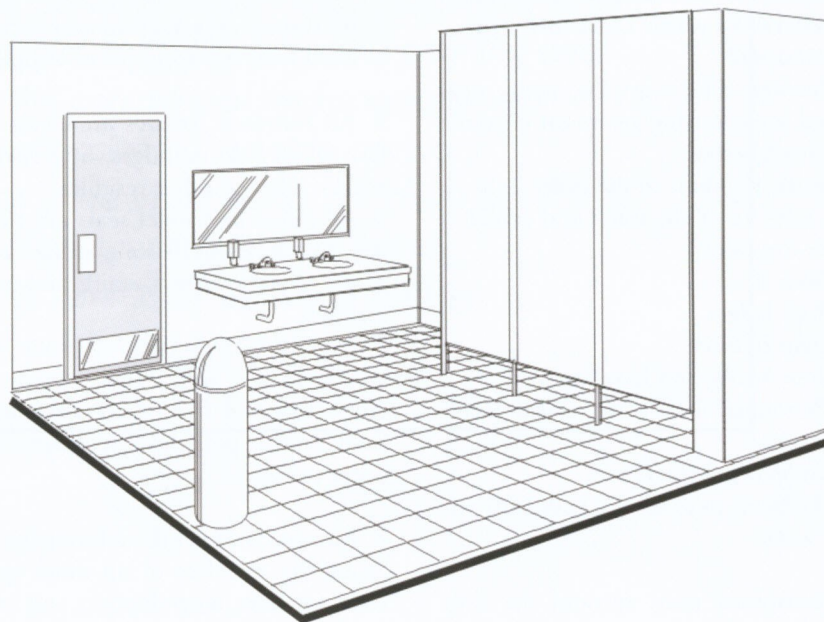
WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF A CLEAN RESTROOM, SCIENTIFICALLY SPEAKING?

A clean restroom is a neat, orderly and healthy environment where harmful microorganisms are under control and the room is free of unwanted substances, pollutants, residues and odors.

“THEY WANT THEIR CUSTOMERS TO KNOW THAT THEY CARE ABOUT THEM”

A retailer needs to partner with a facility service company who has experience setting up cleaning programs that produce clean results. The retailer should make sure that its trained crews and your store team members know the importance of customer service and keeping your restrooms clean and spotless. Detail cleaning will make the difference.

It is not an easy task; many people like to use the restrooms but few like to clean them. (According to a 2006 survey, 27% of the general population in the U.S. stated they would never accept a job if they had to clean the restrooms





This sink was being cleaned by a company 7 days a week in a ladies' room. This photo was taken minutes after the vendor completed its daily cleaning. It was cleaning with a hospital-grade germicidal detergent, a glass cleaner, a neutral-based detergent and a bowl cleaner. Yet it was not able to remove the hard water buildup and staining around the faucets and sink drain.

Cleaning is an activity, a process and a form of management. For instance, cleaning a restroom includes the activity of trash removal, the process of orderly filling dispensers and management of the cleaning process including the sequence of tasks. Clean restrooms don't just happen by accident. It takes good planning and management to provide safe, clean and healthy restroom facilities.

WHAT ARE THE 10 MOST FREQUENTLY NEGLECTED SURFACES OR FIXTURES WHEN CLEANING THE RESTROOM?

Answer: The most frequently neglected areas during restroom cleaning are listed below:

1. Inside the door to the toilet stalls
2. Under lip of the toilet and urinal
3. Ceiling vents
4. Floor drains
5. High ledges
6. Light fixtures
7. Door knobs and handles
8. Plumbing fixtures to sinks, toilets and urinals
9. Underneath the faucet
10. Difficult to reach corners of floors and walls

Restrooms may account for only 5% of total building space, but they

carry nearly 40% of the soil load and receive almost 50% of the building service complaints.

HOW DO YOU KNOW WHEN A PUBLIC RESTROOM IS CLEAN?

Answer: Generally speaking, the restroom is clean when you walk into it and it meets your specific cleaning standards. Following is a list of specific things you would want to see when entering a clean restroom. The restroom is usually considered clean when:

1. All dispensers are clean and correctly filled with the appropriate supplies.
2. All restroom fixtures are clean and free of all soils, smudges, fingerprints, marks, oils and other residues.
3. All toilets and toilet seats are clean, dry and free of all soils, urine, body fluids, spots, splatters, stains and other residues.
4. All urinals and urinal screens are clean, dry and free of all soils, urine, body fluids, spots, splatters, stains and other residues.
5. All sinks and drinking fountains are clean, dry and free of all water spots, soils, splatters, soap deposits and other residues.

6. All floor drain covers are clean and free of soils, lint, mop strings, dirt and other residues.

7. All restroom floor surfaces are clean, dry, slip-resistant and free of soils, dirt, buildups, gum, urine, feces, body fluids, mildew, mold and other residues.

8. All ceiling vents are clean and free of all soils, lint and other residues.

9. All mirrors and metal fixtures are clean and free of smudges, fingermarks, splatters, water spots, streaks and other soils and residues.

10. Restroom air is fresh and free of unpleasant odors.

11. All partitions, doors, doorknobs, walls and ceilings are clean and free of soils, smudges, fingermarks, splatters, water spots, graffiti and other residues.

12. All horizontal surfaces including



This is a picture of a urinal in a men's room at the same store. The restroom was being cleaned by an outside company 7 days a week. Note the staining and water buildup.



This is a picture of the same urinal after it was cleaned with a mild acid to remove all the staining and hard water buildup.

countertops and ledges are clean and free of soils and dirt deposits.

13. All lights are operating properly and light fixtures are clean, free of all soils and residues.

14. All trash has been properly removed from the receptacles with a clean liner installed correctly into the clean receptacle.

15. All trash and debris have been removed from the restroom and disposed of properly.

Facility management is now considered to be a critical component of operational consistency and organizational strength. Facility budgets address a complex array of expenditures from technology to personnel, capital improvements to staff training. Facility managers must understand basic and complex financial concepts. They need to also understand that their facilities department is a cost center and that their department's budget is a significant portion of a company's overhead budget and will always be



It took the cleaning crew 4 minutes to clean this sink using a mild acid and brush followed by rinsing to remove all the staining and hard water buildup.

scrutinized carefully. They should always examine what they can do to improve the financial and operational performance in order for their organization to meet their stated goals. I encourage them to visit the restrooms in their stores if the customer base has access to them and see how clean they are on a daily basis. If they listen to their customers and realize the importance of clean restrooms and provide their store teams with the necessary resources both in-house and with out-

side cleaning vendor support, they should have clean restrooms. If they do not, changes are critical and necessary. If the necessary changes are not made, they will not have to worry about clean restrooms. Their stores will be closed. **PRSM**

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Bugajewski Facility Services' expert knowledgeable team provides detailed cleaning, floor repairs, painting and handyman services to the commercial and specialty retail industry with comprehensive nationwide coverage.

We take great pride in servicing our client base with 110 percent effort and results.

Our clients refer to us as a true partner with superior dependable results.