

Are the cleaning products and tools your organisation uses doing the job, doing it well, and doing it with the least possible negative impact on your employees and the environment?

There are always tradeoffs when it comes to cleanliness. It's vital to look at your cleaning protocols from every angle to identify the right cleaning tools and products for your specific use case.

THE FOUR FACTORS OF CLEANLINESS

There are four factors to consider when choosing what materials and methods your organisation will depend on for cleaning. By sorting them in order of priority, you can narrow your focus to the products and tools best suited for your needs.

Efficacy

What cleaning tools and products are most effective? Stronger or harsher products may not always be the most effective, but in some cases, chemical-based solutions may offer the only acceptable level of cleanliness. Disposable cleaning products may be the safest and most effective depending on the contaminants involved, but reusables need not be counted out. In other cases, the tools used may be dictated by location and surfaces to be cleaned, proximity to other individuals during the cleaning process, and how sterile the finished space needs to be.



Occupational health and safety

OH&S is another huge factor to consider when selecting the best tools and products for a cleaning task. A scrub brush may be highly effective, but can necessitate getting down on hands and knees and scrubbing, causing wear and tear to joints like knees and elbows. Chemicals in cleaning solutions may contain ingredients that could be harmful to skin or mucous membranes. Wet mopping can increase muscle and back strain, and present slip and fall risks.

Productivity

Look for tools that make cleaning easier, faster, and safer. By avoiding equipment that requires bending, stooping, and reaching, you cut down on time involved and increase productivity. Ergonomics should be considered and applied when evaluating tools for ease of use. Mop handles that are too short or too long, mop heads that are unwieldy, and buckets that are difficult to move from

place to place can slow cleaning processes and more quickly exhaust the user. Also, seek options that provide visual cues for proper use—colour coding systems that designate equipment as appropriate for specific use.

Sustainability

Is the cost/value ratio sustainable over time? Disposable cleaning cloths may allow for a faster clean, are highly convenient, eliminate the need for laundering steps, and reduce risks of cross-contamination. However, in many areas of a facility, reusable options may be just as effective. While laundering must be considered, the lifetime value of each cloth may offset the added time and cost involved

in maintenance. Likewise, harsher chemicals may allow for a faster clean and disinfectant procedure, but can require extra budgeting for protective gear. They may also cause breakdown of surfaces and equipment over time, leading to costly replacement needs.

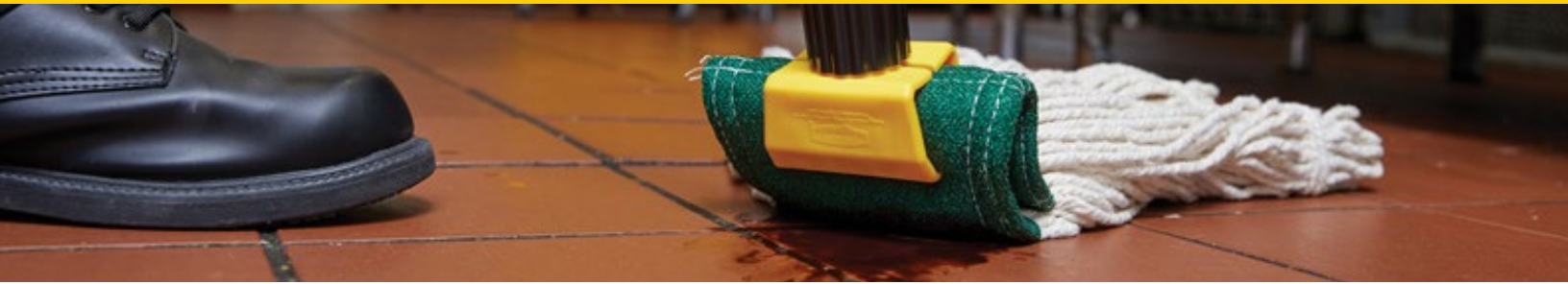


CLEANING GOALS

When selecting a cleaning process and identifying the best equipment to complete it, think about the overall goals and how they are to be prioritised. Typical cleaning goals include:



- ✓ **Superior cleaning results as a routine.** Consistency should be expected from whatever process is ultimately chosen.
- ✓ **Reduced health and safety risks,** from both a physical and functional standpoint. Potential harm from chemical exposure and repetitive motion should both be carefully weighed.
- ✓ **Decreased exposure to chemicals,** both from the cleaning process and any required sterilisation. Combining cleaning and disinfecting steps can reduce exposure, as can considering cleaning solutions that remove much of the need for chemical intervention.
- ✓ **Reduced bioburden and environmental impact.** Decrease in waste can be achieved by selecting reusable tools and materials.



Challenges when it comes to **efficacy**

When it comes to efficacy, the option that provides the fastest, easiest clean may be undesirable for other reasons, such as environmental impact or OH&S risks. That's where reusable cleansing cloths come in to play. For example, this option can lower costs over time, have limited environmental impact and lower the dependence on chemicals for an effective clean. There are cons, however. Those include laundering requirements, potentially limited disinfectant capabilities and more comprehensive training (or retraining) to achieve consistent results that meet required standards.

Challenges when it comes to **OH&S**

There are many known dangers when it comes to common cleaning tools and products. In addition to the damage chemical ingredients and harsh or abrasive cleaning materials can have on surfaces, there may be specific dangers to cleaning staff, including repetitive stress injury or chemical exposure. Your organisation may be required to incur additional costs in safety gear to meet worker safety regulations, and be prepared for potential workers compensation cases. Ergonomic tools and reusable products can resolve some of these issues, and extra training can improve compliance and reduce chances of cross-contamination. Integrating dry mopping technique can reduce grey water and alleviate back and shoulder pain by allowing mopping movements to stay closer to the worker's core.

Challenges when it comes to **productivity**

Productivity can be affected by many factors. The right tools can make all of the difference to workers with a heavy load of cleaning to get through daily. Proper training and stringent documentation requirements can help ensure compliance. However, each additional step can cause extra time to be added to the process. To ensure a high standard of cleanliness, care must be taken not to overload individuals, as corners will almost inevitably be cut. A clear chain of reporting can help provide accountability while keeping productivity on point. Charging buckets that allow all mops required for a cleaning shift to be stored and transported at once relieve the necessity to change or refill water or make multiple trips to exchange mop heads.

Challenges when it comes to **sustainability**

Trying to shift your organisation towards a higher level of environmental conscientiousness and sustainability? Moving towards higher quality tools and reusable products may meet with resistance at first. Issues often raised in regard to reusable products include the potential increased costs for sanitisation and laundering, and worries over compliance with a change in cleaning protocol may also raise concerns. However, the longevity of modern reusables like microfiber cleaning cloths and mop heads can often swing the balance in their favor.

BALANCING ALL FACTORS TO FIND THE BEST SOLUTION

Making the final decisions regarding your organisation's cleaning process and equipment choices should also be informed by the following additional factors:



Risks of the specific workplace

Cleaning an empty office building has a different set of risks than cleaning a bustling healthcare facility. The simple addition of other people present during the cleaning process can add layers of complexity, and affect what tools are appropriate and what solutions are acceptable.

Risks of the specific industry

A retail space will be less likely to present hazardous contaminants than a healthcare institution or food service facility. Biohazards will demand a different type of cleaning process than simple dust or dirt. Bacterial or fungal risks can vary by area within a facility as well.

Space and equipment limitations

For a large building with multiple areas and surface types to be cleaned, space may need to be held for large types of equipment like vacuum systems or commercial floor buffers. This can limit the space available for a wide variety of cleaning products, and require you to make choices in the interest of storage options.

Cost management

Proper training in the use, storage, and maintenance of tools can extend their useable lifespan. Investing in high quality equipment and reusable products can mean a higher upfront capital expenditure, but the cost savings over time can be substantial. Disposable products can be implemented as needed, and compliance with cleaning standards achieved by regular reporting and documentation to avoid costly violations.

RUBBERMAID® SOLUTIONS

Rubbermaid offers a full line of commercial cleaning solutions, including mops, buckets, spill kits, and more. Of particular interest to organisations seeking to shift towards a less chemically dependent cleaning process, HYGEN® microfibre products can pave the way.

HYGEN® microfibre material delivers a superior clean and serves as an ideal alternative to traditional cleaning products. Options include:

- ✓ HYGEN® microfibre disposable cloths, for productivity and 99.9% microbe removal cleaning
- ✓ HYGEN® microfibre mitts and wand covers for hard to reach and hard to clean surfaces like blinds and glass
- ✓ HYGEN® microfibre cloths, for long lasting use and higher cost savings over time
- ✓ HYGEN® microfibre pulse mops for speed, efficiency, and a better overall clean

The innovative technology allows for effective, easy removal of dirt, bacteria, and allergens from a variety of surfaces, making it a viable choice for all industries and levels of cleanliness required. From food service to healthcare, from retail to office suite, HYGEN® microfibre products deliver a cost-efficient, highly effective, compliant and user-friendly way to achieve your organisation's various cleaning goals.

Evaluating cleaning product tradeoffs doesn't mean having to settle for less than the best available option. With HYGEN®, you can mix and match products and equipment to create customised solutions. This can provide your cleaning staff with safe, efficient ways to complete their tasks, and also keep you in compliance with the most stringent standards. Health, safety, and cleanliness should always go hand in hand.



