

# TAKE 5 INDUSTRY SOLUTIONS

## CLEANING TOOLS

Take5 Industry Solutions takes questions *Contracting Profits* has received from building service contractors and poses them directly to cleaning industry manufacturers. Each month questions and answers for a different product category will be featured.

### When choosing hand soaps, what is the difference between antibacterial and antimicrobial?

**Richard Schmidt:** Practically speaking there is no difference. Even the U.S. Food and Drug Administration uses these terms interchangeably. Literally there would be a difference. Anti-bacterial would be active against bacteria only. Anti-microbial would be active against microorganisms in general, e.g., bacteria, viruses, etc.

### LEED-certified facilities don't allow anti-microbial soaps. Is there a greater likelihood of building occupants spreading disease in these facilities?

**Schmidt:** I think that possibility needs to be considered. Certainly the most important hygiene action to take is referred to another hand or object that was touched. In one study comparing antimicrobial soap to an ordinary soap, the data suggested that washing with antimicrobial soap could help reduce transmission of disease by 50 percent compared to washing with an ordinary soap ("Reduction of Bacteria from Hands to Food", Journal of Food Protection, Vol. 70, 2007).

Practicing proper hand hygiene (which includes using cleanser and tepid water, utilizing adequate friction, washing for at least 20 seconds, rinsing thoroughly and drying

with paper toweling or approved air drying device) is the important factor in keeping occupants healthy. It is vital to educate workers about the importance of hand hygiene and to inform them that participation can help prevent sickness, expensive visits to a physician and lost work time.

### Is foam hand soap more cost-effective than liquid soap?

**Schmidt:** Foaming hand soaps definitely have the potential to be Practicing proper hand hygiene (which includes using cleanser and tepid water, utilizing adequate friction, washing for at least 20 seconds, rinsing thoroughly and drying with paper toweling or approved air drying device) is the important factor in keeping occupants healthy. It is vital to educate workers about the importance of hand hygiene and to inform them that participation can help prevent sickness, expensive visits to a physician and lost work time.

### LEED-certified facilities don't allow anti-microbial soaps. Is there a greater likelihood of building occupants spreading disease in these facilities?

**Schmidt:** I think that possibility needs to be considered. Certainly the most important action to take is to simply wash your hands. However, beyond that, our research

department has published several papers showing that under like washing conditions, the quality of the soap can make a big difference in not only the amount of hands after washing, but also the number suggested that washing with antimicrobial soap could help reduce transmission of disease by 50 percent compared to washing with an ordinary soap ("Reduction of Bacteria from Hands to Food", Journal of Food Protection, Vol. 70, 2007).

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