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Cleaning with a conscience

Decontamination in Schools

About Decontamination in Schools

In schools, it is not uncommon for childhood diseases to spread quickly and all it takes is for one child to fall ill before it becomes an epidemic.

Of course, the cleanliness and hygiene of the school will play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of the pupils there. Toilets and washrooms often serve as an indicator of a school's standards of cleanliness, but particular care and attention needs to be paid to high contact areas in the building, such as door handles, tables, food preparation areas and cutlery.

Sanitisation goes beyond deep cleaning, which should already form part of any responsible cleaning regime, and covers a range of cleaning techniques and technologies, which have seen innovative advances in recent years.

What?

To be thorough, a hygienic cleaning service must combat airborne contaminants and sanitise surfaces.

Hand sanitisers are increasingly common in washrooms and communal areas, not just in response to outbreaks of vomiting bugs, but also as a pre-emptive measure.

Wall-mounted sanitisation units can decontaminate the atmosphere by drawing in air, which is decontaminated by UV light and ozone, before being recirculated.

Who?

After half the pupils in a community school were struck down with what proved to be the Norovirus, Nviro carried an extensive reactive fogging programme.

ATP testing showed that the treatment had been effective. Subsequent random tests indicated that counts remained very low.

Steam cleaning is another effective proven sanitisation treatment; combining the deep cleaning power of steam with efficient boiler technology, removing the need for harmful chemicals. A small amount of cold tap water is used to create a superheated 'dry' steam, that not only dissolves grease and grime, but also sanitises surfaces to prevent cross-contamination.

Fogging is a highly effective treatment to manage infection control and combat viruses and bacteria. This involves creating a fine mist with biocide. These particles are microscopic and remain suspended in the air long enough to kill airborne viruses and micro-organisms. The chemical eliminates pathogens on ceilings and walls, furniture and floors, reaching areas such as soft play areas that are difficult to clean with other, more traditional techniques.

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How?

Previously, chemicals used in fogging activities could adversely affect people and certain materials such as plastic, fabrics and metal. Also, areas would have to be sealed off for days at a time. With today's chemicals, the fogging process is rapid, safe and efficient. To avoid disruption and risk of allergic reactions, areas do need to be clear of people, so fogging needs to be done outside of working or opening hours, however this only takes a matter of minutes.

Nviro favours a water-based antimicrobial that is non-hazardous, odourless, and harmless to the environment. This solution contains four different biocides so that a bacterium with resistance to one agent will be eliminated by the others. It is effective against a wide range of microbes, including E. coli, MRSA, C. difficile, listeria, salmonella and Legionella pneumophilia.

Whatever the cleaning regime, standards of cleanliness should be monitored. When it comes to sanitisation, performance needs to be measured scientifically. It's now relatively simple to do this by testing for microbes using a hand-held monitor that measures adenosine triphosphate (ATP). The ATP molecule is found in and around living cells. It's used as a direct measure of biological concentrations and health. A luminometer gives us a reliable indication of ATP levels.

Normal practice is to test for ATP before and after fogging. We have carried out multiple trials at our own offices and at client sites. These have shown a very dramatic decline in ATP counts.

Why?

The evidence from our monitoring is that the impact of fogging is both immediate and long-lasting.

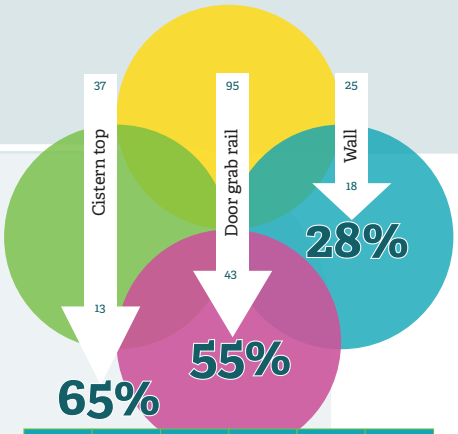
Response Decontamination

Fogging and other sanitisation measures should feature in contingency planning for the winter season and other times of heightened risk, such as a swine flu outbreak, which can happen at any time. It is also recommended to be part of a full decontamination clean after an infectious outbreak.

Routine Decontamination

A regular fogging regime can provide a good level of protection against infectious outbreaks, due to the biocide continuing to act as a bactericide and virucide. Chemical suppliers claim the residual efficacy of a fogging agent can extend into months and longer.

ATP Results



	Date	Time	Location	Surface	RLU*
Before	18/06/2015	17:24	Toilet	Cistern top	37
Before	18/06/2015	17:25	Toilet	Wall	25
Before	18/06/2015	17:26	Toilet	Toilet base	0
Before	18/06/2015	17:28	Toilet	Door grab rail	95
After	18/06/2015	17:50	Toilet	Cistern top	13
After	18/06/2015	17:51	Toilet	Wall	18
After	18/06/2015	17:52	Toilet	Door grab rail	43

*RLU = Relative Light Units, measuring the presence of ATP detected by a luminometer

Nviro recommends having areas regularly decontaminated by fogging (at least twice a year) to achieve a good level of protection. Contact us today on 0800 032 1334 for a cleaning experience with a difference.

www.nviro.co.uk

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