



FACILITY MANAGERS AT NORTHWESTERN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL DELIVER RX FOR HAND HYGIENE AND MAINTENANCE ISSUES

The Northwestern Memorial Hospital Infection Control Board concluded that XLERATOR® was the most hygienic hand drying option. Over 100 XLERATOR Hand Dryers were installed – meeting the board’s rigorous hygiene standards.



CLEAN HANDS EVERY TIME

In 2010, Northwestern Memorial Hospital (NMH), one of the country’s premier academic medical centers, launched a major hand washing campaign aimed at employees, patients and visitors: Clean hands every time.

“A primary focus has been reducing maintenance needs while improving sanitation in the hospital’s hundreds of staff and public washrooms,” says David Stout, Director of Facilities Engineering. “As washrooms are renovated, we’re installing equipment and materials that are much easier to maintain, have longer life spans and keep the restrooms sanitary.”

Going into the refurbishment project, Stout and his team were faced with daily restroom plumbing and maintenance issues related to paper towels. “The paper towels were getting flushed down the low-flow toilets, causing blockages,” says Stout. “The continuous plumbing calls combined with the high levels of restroom maintenance were taking up a considerable amount of time and costly resources. That’s when we got serious about looking into heated air electric hand dryers.”

DEBUNKING HYGIENE MYTHS

Since proper hand hygiene is among the most important steps hospital staff can take to prevent infections in patients, the facilities engineering team looked into a number of hand drying options and then consulted with the NMH Infection Control Board on which hand dryer model would be the most hygienic.

As high-speed, energy-efficient hand dryers have grown in popularity, so have the scare tactics used by the industry’s competitors, touting dryer hygiene as a concern. “There is a lot of confusion and misinformation about the use of hand dryers in healthcare facilities,” says William Gagnon, Vice President of Marketing and Sales, Excel Dryer. “Numerous scientific researchers have validated the hygienic safety of heated air as a drying medium. These independent, third party studies were conducted with careful methodology at major academic or medical institutions.”

A study conducted by the Mayo Clinic, a nonprofit, worldwide leader in medical care, research and education, evaluated the effects of four different hand drying methods regarding the removal of bacteria from washed hands. The study concludes that “there are no differences in the efficiencies of removing bacteria from washed hands when hands are dried using paper towels, cloth towels, warm forced air or spontaneous evaporation.”

While high-speed hand dryers are regarded as a hygienic hand drying choice in facilities around the world, facility managers should research their options carefully, as all hand dryers are not

› PROBLEM

Plumbing and maintenance issues, time and costly resources

› SOLUTION

Over 100 XLERATOR Hand Dryers

› RESULTS

Annual savings over \$20,000, reduced transportation costs, paper towels storage and waste reduction



created equal. Manufacturer designs vary between a traditional – with the hands positioned under the air outlet or a trough-style – in which the user puts their hands into a trough like area or enclosure.

After review, the NMH Infection Control board concluded that dryers with traditional high-velocity heated air streams were the most hygienic option, citing concerns that trough-style dryers could catch and hold water blown off users' hands, leaving pools of stagnant water where bacteria can grow. The trough area is also susceptible to collecting trash and foreign objects such as hair, gum and/or other liquids, further creating an unhygienic environment and potential breeding area for bacteria.

With approval from NMH's Infection Control board, the facilities staff installed more than 100 XLERATOR high-speed, energy-efficient hand dryers the first year, thus meeting the hospital's rigorous standards for hand hygiene. Installation of the hand dryers also complemented the hospital's existing low-flow toilets, sinks and urinals.

The XLERATOR dries hands completely in 8 seconds* and represents a 95% cost savings when compared to paper towels, reducing maintenance and improving restroom hygiene. XLERATOR is also the only hand dryer to be Made In USA Certified®, is BuildingGreen Approved and helps facilities qualify for LEED credits. In 2017, Excel Dryer became the first hand dryer manufacturer to publish third-party verified Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs).

COST SAVINGS ANALYSIS

Stout's cost savings analysis, which compared the facility's paper towel use to the installation of (30) XLERATOR high-speed dryers revealed an initial annual savings of more than \$20,000. Cost savings and benefits also came in the form of reduced transportation costs, paper towel storage and waste reduction. "After installing the dryers our plumbing issues were eliminated and our bathrooms were cleaner," says Stout.

To date, more than 120 dryers have been installed at Northwestern Memorial Hospital's main campus with more to come as the hospital embarks on the building and opening of two new facilities – its Lake Forest campus and most recently, its Northwestern Organ Transplant Clinic in Joliet, IL.

"We look at this product like it was tailor made for us," says Stout.



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›› DAVID STOUT
DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES
ENGINEERING

*Dry time and energy use testing performed by SGS International on standard XLERATOR Hand Dryer with 0.8" nozzle to 0.25g or less of residual moisture, pursuant to the UL Environment Global Product Category Rules (PCR) for Hand Dryers.



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