Hospital Disinfection: Efficacy and Safety Issues

By DR. MARKUS DETTENKOFER,
Freiburg University Hospital, Germany

The key question as to whether the use of disinfectants on environmental surfaces, or whether cleaning with detergents only reduces nosocomial infection rates, still awaits conclusive studies.

New disinfectants, mainly peroxygen compounds, show good sporidical properties and will probably replace more problematic substances such as chlorine-releasing agents.

The safe reprocessing of medical devices requires a well-coordinated approach, starting with proper cleaning. New methods and substances show promising activity for preventing the transmission of prions.

Various different aspects of virus inactivation have been studied, and the transmissibility – e.g. of norovirus – shows the need for sound data on how different disinfectant classes perform.

Biofilms or other forms of surface-adherent organisms pose an extraordinary challenge to decontamination. Although resistance to biocides is generally not judged as yet to be as critical as antibiotic resistance, scientific data support the need for proper use, notably including the avoidance of widespread application, especially in low concentrations and in consumer products.

Chemical disinfection of heat-sensitive instruments and targeted disinfection of environmental surfaces are established components of hospital infection control. To avoid danger to staff, patients and the environment, prudent use as well as established safety precautions are required.

New technologies and products should be evaluated with sound methods. As emerging resistant pathogens will challenge healthcare facilities in the future even more than at present, there is a need for well-designed studies addressing the role of disinfection in hospital infection control.

- Reprinted from Volume 11 of the Virox Solutions newsletter.

Cleaning and Surgical Disinfection

By DR. MARTIN EXNER,
Institute of Hygiene and Public Health, University of Bonn

Recently, new insights into the persistence of pathogens, their transfer from inanimate surfaces to humans, and the risk of contamination and dissemination of pathogens by detergents have been gained.

Furthermore, new experimental data on the interruption of chains of infection by disinfectants as well as results of outbreak-control studies are now available. Hence it has become necessary to reassess the potential benefits of using disinfectants to prevent and control nosocomial infections.

Based on the new findings and in view of the increasing incidence of nosocomial infections and antibiotic resistance, the German Robert Koch-Institute has issued completely revised recommendations on cleaning and surface disinfection.

With respect to these recommendations, a new test method was developed, which allows comparison of the efficacy of disinfection in reducing the microbial loads and their dissemination with that of cleaning procedures under practical conditions.

In a multi-factor approach, mechanical properties (wet mop technique), utensils (different mop materials) and active agents (disinfectant, detergent) were taken into consideration. We found that under the
Keeping Winter Floors Clean, Shiny and Safe

By SOFIA A. MODESTO

Winter is almost here and it can be tough on floors. Adverse weather conditions often amplify floor care problems and make the need for a floor care maintenance program all the more important.

Below are a few tips to help keep floors looking their best during the winter months:

Grit Control: A floor maintenance program should start with a “grit control” system. This helps reduce labour time, and prevents slips and falls. The most efficient way to implement grit control is by employing high performing matting systems to help collect and trap soil on shoes at all building entries. Interior matting is also needed to remove moisture and additional soils.

Increase Cleaning Frequencies: Snow and rain in winter months often mean that more moisture is brought into a facility. Increase mopping or autoscrubbing frequencies to help remove soil and prevent accidents. Also, make sure floors are adequately cleaned before burnishing, especially during the winter months, or grit and soil may be ground into the finish, marring its appearance and causing it to yellow.

Understand Ice Melters: Many areas of the country use chemical ice melters during the winter months. Cleaning professionals need to be aware of the impact these have on floors and safety. For instance, sodium chloride, a very common ice melter, is abrasive by nature and can harm interior floors if it is not trapped on mats or removed by cleaning. Calcium chloride, an alternative to sodium chloride, absorbs moisture but turns it into a greasy film in warm buildings. Autoscrubbing can be very effective in these situations, because it removes grit and greasy residue, and helps prevent slips, falls and damaged floors.

Prevent Finish-Adhesion Loss: A final winter floor care problem concerns finish adhesion. A floor finish on marginally porous floors, such as quarry tile, may produce a tough, high-gloss finish in warm months. However, the same floor may suffer finish-adhesion loss in the cold and gritty conditions in winter. Again, the best ways to prevent this are with mats that stop grit before it enters the facility, more frequent cleansings, and with autoscrubbing. It may also be necessary to recoat in the winter. Recoating should be performed when the floor temperature is 50 degrees Fahrenheit (10 degrees Celsius) or warmer. If it is colder, cracks may develop in the finish, and more adhesion problems will result.

Winter floor care often does take more time and attention. Increasing floor maintenance programs and mechanizing floor work as much as possible will help reduce the time needed to maintain floors, decrease labour costs and keep floors looking their very best. Floors can shine year-round. A proper maintenance program and effective floor care equipment are all you need.

CLEANING AND SURGICAL DISINFECTION

Continued From Page 1

given conditions, dissemination of the test organism Staphylococcus aureus did not take place when using aldehydes and peroxides. It did take place, however, when water, surfactants, and the disinfectant glycol derivatives, quaternary ammonium compounds and alkylamines were used.

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Clean The Prairies is edited for the people who maintain high standards of sanitary cleaning in commercial, institutional, residential and industrial facilities (including hospitals, nursing homes and long-term care facilities, schools, food processing plants, hotels, motels, recreational centres, shopping malls, government facilities, restaurants) as well as building owners, maintenance contractors, sanitary maintenance distributors and carpet cleaners.

The editorial objective of Clean The Prairies is to provide new and views about new cleaning technologies, new sanitary cleaning methods, infection control procedures, contractor issues, technical and legal matters, cleaning regulations and standards, educational opportunities, industry trends and information for people within the industry.

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As more and more Canadians are dining out, food safety control is increasingly becoming a concern for both consumers and the food industry. Though Canada’s food supply is one of the safest in the world, foodborne illnesses are nevertheless fairly common. Health Canada tracks outbreaks and publishes the statistics in its annual report “Foodborne and Waterborne Disease in Canada.”

It is estimated that for every case of foodborne disease reported, 350 cases go unreported. The report states that there are 2.2 million cases of people made sick by contaminated food in Canada, with up to $1 billion dollars being spent on medical support, lost income and associated expenses. Considering these significant costs, food safety is worthy of everyone’s attention, especially restaurant owners.

Does your food service establishment meet food and health safety standards?

According to food safety inspectors, a critical violation by a food service establishment means that there has been a violation that may result in food becoming contaminated. Critical violations are a benchmark for judging restaurant’s cleanliness. According to research conducted by Dateline NBC (2004), a whopping 82 per cent of the 1000 restaurants that they examined in the United States had at least one critical violation. They reported a 60 per cent critical violation rate for fast food restaurants. Casual and family dining chains came out worse.

Don’t wait for a food inspector to come knocking on your door in order to find out if your establishment meets food safety standards. A single case of food poisoning associated with your establishment can prove to be fatal. Recent surveys show that customers are increasingly paying attention to clues such as the cleanliness of bathrooms as an indication of the cleanliness of your restaurant’s kitchen. Customers are quick to spot grimy countertops, dirty floors, bathrooms that have been mopped in a circle (you know the type: all the corners are black with gunk), and trash spilling out of the containers. It’s a real turn-off. There is no doubt about it: the cleanliness of your establishment directly affects your bottom line.

By being pro-active and investing in your establishment’s food safety, not only are you ensuring that your customers are happy repeat customers, but you are going a long way in protecting the reputation of your business. Owen Chong, an education consultant with Food Safety Healthy Environment, stresses the critical role that restaurant owners play in food safety: “Restaurant owners NEED to be proactive and educate themselves about food safety. This encompasses learning about proper temperature control, cross contamination and proper sanitization.”

A simple sanitation program for your establishment

Keeping your restaurant clean is one of the most important steps in the prevention of foodborne illnesses. When it comes to finding the proper cleaning maintenance program for your business, look for a system that is simple and easy to use. With the quick personnel turnovers in the foodservice industry, as well as additional obstacles such as language barriers and literacy, it is critical that your employees be trained quickly and easily to properly use any cleaning system that you choose. With so many different surfaces to disinfect in a restaurant (i.e. counters, sinks, cutting boards, slicers, floors, tables, chairs, bathrooms, etc.) a line of cleaning products that is illustrated with pictograms and colour-coded for different surfaces will help your employees quickly learn and provide them with a daily reminder of correct use. Wall charts can also be very effective. Seek a cleaning solution provided who offers training to your employees. This added benefit will provide you with the optimum use of the products purchased and allow you to focus your time and resources on other aspects of your business. A cleaning system that can be customized to fit your needs is ideal since it can go a long way in making your life simpler.

In order to further safeguard the health and safety of your employees, take the time to educate yourself and decide which sanitation program is right for you. Bleach is frequently used in cleaning and is a popular component in most cleaning product, although it has been
CLEAN THE PRAIRIES

DECEMBER 2006

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The economy of concentrates with the accuracy of dispensing all in one spray providing an effective clean that is safe.

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SIMPLY CLEAN AND SAFE

FIGURE ONE

FOLLOW THESE STEPS FOR MAXIMUM BACTERIA REDUCTION

1. Wet hands with water.
2. Use a sufficient amount of soap.
3. Lather soap and scrub hands well, palm to palm.
4. Scrub between interlated fingers.
5. Scrub back of each hand with palm of other hand.
6. Scrub fingertips of each hand in opposite palm.
7. Scrub each thumb clapsed in opposite hand.
8. Scrub each wrist clapsed in opposite hand.
9. Rise thoroughly under running water.
10. Wipe and dry hands well with single use paper towel.

ADDITIOnAL FOOD HEALTH & SAFETY TIPS:

• Proper hand washing – Not only should surfaces be washed and disinfected frequently, so should hands. Remember when mom always reminded you to “wash your hands!”... she was right. Hands spread an estimated 80 per cent of common infectious diseases. Proper hand washing, though simple, is often neglected. Experts all agree that the single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to wash our hands.

• Not only is hand washing essential, but HOW you wash is key. And spreading illness to others is how food becomes contaminated. Cross-contamination allows bacteria to spread from one food product to another. This is especially dangerous for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Keep these surfaces clean and sanitize them frequently, so should hands. Remember when mom always reminded you to “wash your hands!”... she was right. Hands spread an estimated 80 per cent of common infectious diseases. Proper hand washing, though simple, is often neglected. Experts all agree that the single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to wash our hands.

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• Separate. Don’t cross-contaminate. Cross-contamination allows bacteria to spread from one food product to another. This is especially dangerous for raw meat, poultry and seafood. Keep these surfaces clean and sanitize them frequently, so should hands. Remember when mom always reminded you to “wash your hands!”... she was right. Hands spread an estimated 80 per cent of common infectious diseases. Proper hand washing, though simple, is often neglected. Experts all agree that the single most important thing we can do to keep from getting sick and spreading illness to others is to wash our hands.

• Temperature Control. Cook food to proper temperatures. Bacteria multiply rapidly between 4.4 degrees Celsius (40 degrees Fahrenheit) and 60 degrees Celsius (140 degrees Fahrenheit). Food is properly cooked when it is heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that causes foodborne illness. Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. Public health officials recommend setting the refrigerator at 1.1 degrees Celsius (34 degrees Fahrenheit) to 3.3 degrees Celsius (38 degrees Fahrenheit) and the freezer unit at minus 17.7 degrees Celsius (zero degrees Fahrenheit) and occasionally checking these temperatures with an appliance thermometer.

• Handwashing For Your Health
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Sources

Wood Wyant

“Providing customers with the tools to measure the results of their actions”

Wood Wyant has seen a great deal of change in its 84 years of existence, but one thing that holds true to this day is the focus of “providing its customers tools to measure the results of their actions” through quality products and services.

G.H. Wood & Company was founded in early 1922 by a 27-year-old Geoffrey Hutchence Wood. The company started out in a facility at 28 Wellington St. E. in downtown Toronto. At that time, the company consisted of a one room office on the ground floor which housed a roll top desk and chair. After one year, Wood moved the company to the second floor of the building which had two offices.

Even in the early days, Wood had the foresight of building his company based on the principles of providing improvement of public health and cleanliness in the workplace.

When he first opened for business, the only product he carried was the Konex cup – a cone-shaped paper water cup.

Wood used the sales pitch that current methods of drinking water in restaurant washrooms, fountains and in offices were germ laden and unhygienic. Armed with his disposable paper cups, he sold them to insurance companies and government agencies to help them get rid of the
Cascades has been green for over forty years. Decades before environmentalism was a buzzword, we were working on new ways to recycle, re-use, and keep the planet pristine for the next generation. We’re still going strong, as a supplier of choice for green paper products including towels, napkins, tissues and wipers; proud of our generational commitment to remain the greenest company in the industry.

Green before green was trendy

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Better ways to help our customers make wise choices - naturally

When your cost to clean goes down, your profitability goes up.

When more than 90% of your cleaning costs are labour, you can’t afford to waste time. The key to profitable contract cleaning is in selecting equipment that makes your workers as productive as possible. That means you need the most innovative, efficient and easy-to-use cleaning equipment in the industry.

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We'll help drive down your costs - and drive up your profitability.

To get started, request our FREE bulletin, Selecting floor cleaning equipment for maximum productivity. In Canada, call 1-888-382-0004 or email info@nfmadvance.ca.
The Jan-San Environmental Chemical Revolution

By DALE ALLEN
President
Sci-Tech Engineered Chemicals Inc.

The environmental “green craze” currently sweeping the land has been a long time coming. We as Canadians pride ourselves on the fact that here in North America we are world leaders in all things important. The irrationality of this thought is self-evident; the environmental based chemistry of our new green revolution was first tested and marketed in Northern Europe over a decade ago. The governments of Norway, Denmark and Sweden lead the way by enacting environmental legislation promoting the growth of environmental chemistry within the cleaning industry.

The first attempts in Canada to “green” up our chemistry was a dismal failure. The concept went something like this: if we cut our conventional chemistry 50 per cent with water, we will have cut the chemical effluent by 50 per cent. This watered down concept is still in use by many manufacturers of cleaning chemcials. The idea to reduce the amount of effluent is sound in its basic concept, however, the performance of the product is also typically reduced by 50 per cent. The Europeans’ approach to this problem a decade ago was to completely replace traditional chemistry with environmental based chemistry.

Traditional cleaning chemicals have typically relied upon petroleum solvents, caustics, glycols, terpene hydrocarbons, butyls and phenyls to provide performance. True environmental products are powerful combinations of nonionic organic plant matter (surfactants). They have parts that are soluble in water and parts that are soluble in oils, providing excellent degreasing properties. Nonionic surfactants react differently than traditional cleaners in that these surfactants do not attack dirt and oil as with most traditional chemicals. These surfactants reduce dynamic surface tension (DST) increasing the solubility of a substance allowing water to mix easily with oil and dirt thus encapsulating the soil within the water enabling it to be carried from the surface being cleaned (wash away ability). Superior penetration and removal of oil/greasy particulate soils provide the ability to clean areas where agitation is restricted. These types of environmentally organically structured products will out-perform most hazardous traditional chemicals on grease, oil, asphaltenes and particulate soils, while providing 48 hour biodegradation back to carbon and oxygen. The most commonly used organic matter consists of some very effective chemistry with grains, corn oils, palm kernel oil, coconut oil, sugar cane juices, glucose, and corn and soy based esters (alcohol ethoxylates).

A surprising component of the crusade for a green Canada is the fact that this is a pull-through market, driven by consumer demand and not the manufacturers of the chemical products. Canadians are demanding action regarding a number of environmental issues while the industry for the most part has not addressed the issues. This was quite evident at the “Globe Conference” on world environmental issues held in Vancouver in 2006. Consumer groups and politicians from several governments were in attendance while industry was noticeably absent. Consumer environmental product demand is typical Adam Smith (invisible hand) economics; in that the consumer will dictate the wants/needs of the markets while suppliers fill the wants/needs.

This new environmental awareness benefits all of us. We have mis-used or overused chemistry for too long. Hydrochloric acid for washing room cleaning, caustic floor strippers and ethylene glycol butyl ether for general purpose cleaning. While these types of conventional chemicals have their use in the marketplace, over-use is a genuine problem. In a survey of 32 facilities in Richmond, Calif., regarding 250 janitorial products, the findings were:

• Seven per cent should not be used as they could cause cancer or were very damaging to the environment.
• Fifty-six per cent require extreme care as the ingredients can cause blindness, severe skin damage, interfere with the endocrine system, can be absorbed through the skin or inhaled and subsequently causing damage to the blood, liver, kidneys, nervous system, or a developing fetus.
• Thirty-seven per cent require pert sanitation solutions with measurable results.

Today, Wood Wyant has 17 Customer Care facilities operating coast to coast across Canada and a direct sales force of over 100 employees. As a leader in the Green revolution (“Paper Without Trees”), Wood Wyant offers paper systems made using recycled material; technology first introduced by Wyant in 1967. Additionally, Wood Wyant carries a wide array of certified Green products, low/no scent and low VOC products.

To highlight its quality product line and provide value-added services to its customers, Wood Wyant has invested heavily in providing a complete training program. Brock Wylie was appointed director of training and now has four full-time trainers who coordinate all the training activities for both employees and customers. As Wood Wyant enters its 85th year of existence, the company still stands strong with the philosophy of cleaning for health, and providing the vast array of products to make that belief a reality.

For more information, contact Wood Wyant at info@woodwyant.com or visit the company’s web site at www.woodwyant.com.
Chasing Productivity

By COLIN BUTTFIELD, President, Group B Services Ltd.

Productivity. As cleaning industry consultants, my partner Brent Bourne and I hear the word almost on a daily basis from clients who need to increase the productivity of their cleaning staff and from sales reps promoting the productivity benefits of their equipment, tools or cleaning solutions. But what is productivity and how is it achieved?

Checking online dictionaries, we found this was the most common definition:

**Productivity** – Productivity is used to measure the efficiency of production and is most often expressed as a ratio of outputs over inputs.

Outputs and inputs. Sounds simple enough but when applied to the cleaning industry, it’s a bit like comparing apples and oranges. Apart from the simple ratio of “dollars invested to dollars earned” that can apply to Commercial Cleaning operations the vast majority of cleaning services need to understand productivity in a different way if they are to improve their effectiveness.

Generally, productivity is measured as a comparison of the cost of delivering an acceptable or better cleaning service to clients compared to peer group average costs. This is often expressed as “area serviced per Full Time Equivalent (FTE).” This is a crude measurement that doesn’t always represent the same quality of service. What is really important is to be sure that all the inputs actually enhance the productivity of the workers and that negative inputs are avoided.

Understanding how the inputs affect the outputs is crucial to a successful operation so a review of inputs is needed before looking for outputs. In the Cleaning Industry the inputs are usually Management, Supervision, Training, Equipment and Supplies. Each input has several important features that need to be considered; also some inputs have a multiplier effect – for good or bad. An organization will fail if it simply minimizes inputs and expects a good output. For example, low wages, no training, poor equipment and cheap supplies doesn’t have a long-term prospect of high productivity or profitability.

**Management.** Because management tends to have control over the other inputs, it’s important to be sure that all the inputs are managed effectively. Failing to deal with absenteeism, safety hazards, poor equipment and lack of training will also significantly affect productivity.

**Supervision.** The supervisor is the link between the objectives set by management and the workforce. Supervisors monitor the work to make sure that standards are being met and the cleaning program is being followed. They check for situations that will affect productivity such as safety hazards, poorly training workers, proper use of the right supplies, equipment for the work and also make sure that management is kept aware of issues that could affect productivity.

**Training.** Despite the common view of our industry, cleaning is a skilled occupation. An untrained cleaning staff not only perpetuates this view but also produces poor work at high cost. Training is an absolutely essential input for any operation that seeks high productivity. Trained workers, using the best equipment and supplies for the work, will always deliver productivity at about twice the rate of untrained staff, even if the untrained staff has good equipment and supplies. Training and education of cleaning staff will always produce a real productivity benefit. Well trained employees who know that they are properly trained have more interest in the work and generally will have better attendance and fewer workplace injuries.

Managers and supervisors also benefit from ongoing education and training. By attending educational conferences and trade shows, they can stay abreast of industry trends, share information with their peers...
Canadian-U.S. Partnership A “Clean Sweep” for 2006 Business Achievement Award

Virotech and JohnsonDiversey recognized for cross-border collaboration on green disinfectants for healthcare use

The Canadian American Business Council, the voice of the Canadian-American business community, has selected Virotech Technologies Inc., Oakville, Ont., and JohnsonDiversey Inc., Sturtevant, Wis., to be awarded the prestigious Business Achievement Award for their collaboration in developing and distributing a safe and environmentally-friendly hydrogen peroxide-based disinfectant.

In 2001, Virotech and JohnsonDiversey formed a partnership in the ongoing fight against infectious disease and, together, have proven that a disinfectant need not be toxic to be effective. Past award winners have included Research in Motion (RIM), Intel Corporation, Synacore and Caterpillar.

Each year, the Council identifies innovative and successful alliances between Canadian and American businesses to recognize the benefits that these partnerships bring to both countries – in jobs, innovation and revenue creation. Judges look for sustained profitability, job creation, financial strength, environmental responsibility and exceptional innovation.

“The judges for this year’s Business Achievement Award were not only impressed by the working partnership between the two companies, but also by the positive impact their solution has for reducing the threat of infectious disease,” said Randolph Dove, board chairman, Canadian American Business Council. “The CABC recognizes their incredible work and applauds their cross-border alliance on a global scale.”

“Many disinfectants are currently under scrutiny due to increasing concern with human and environmental safety,” said Dr. Syed A. Sattar, director of the Centre for Research on Environmental Microbiology, University of Ottawa. “Too many disinfectants have a narrow spectrum of germicidal activity, because most products are only tested against easy-to-kill bacteria and not against more resistant viruses. The Virotech/JohnsonDiversey partnership is meeting the need for safer, more effective germicides.”

Virotech and JohnsonDiversey were formally presented with their award at the 12th Annual Awards luncheon which was held during the North American Competitiveness Forum on Nov. 8, at the Royal York Hotel, Toronto, Ont.

The Canadian American Business Council is the voice of business in the world’s most prosperous relationship. Established in 1987, the Council is a non-profit, issues-oriented organization dedicated to elevating the private sector perspective on issues that affect our two nations. Our member are key business leaders and stakeholders from both sides of the border. The Council’s activities include high-level briefings on issues of current concern, assistance with practical trade and policy challenges, significant networking opportunities and informative seminars.

Continued From Page 8

peers in other facilities and meet with industry experts.

Equipment. The cleaning industry has produced an amazing variety of specialized equipment to allow operators to scrub, polish, vacuum, sweep strip and refinish large areas in less time than is possible with simple hand tools. However, the choice of which equipment to use should depend on the work to be done. Using large equipment for a small job is as inefficient as using hand tools for a large job. Sizing the equipment to the job may mean buying a 20-inch walk behind scrubber instead of a 32-inch ride on. If management has planned the work and bought equipment suited to it, and the employee has trained well in the machine’s operation, then productivity will definitely benefit.

On the other hand, giving an untrained worker an expensive piece of equipment to do a job that is unsuited to the equipment is a recipe for low productivity and low morale, and possibly a time loss injury as well.

Supplies. Supplies represent a small percentage of inputs in dollar terms so buying the products that are safe, easier to use, longer lasting and readily available is going to have a positive effect on productivity. Productivity takes a nosedive when cheap, poor performing products such as finishes, detergents and degreasers, among others, are supplied to workers who are then expected to do a good job. Purchasing incompatible supplies from several manufacturers, such as finish from company A and stripper from company B often result in wasted time and effort, and a poor job.

Maintaining a secure supply of products is also of great importance to productivity. Time lost waiting for supplies and time wasted trying to get a good job from low quality, cheaper products means that the positive benefits of good management, good training and the right equipment are lost.

What is needed to achieve good productivity is for all of the relevant inputs, management, supervision, training, equipment and supplies to be in place and for these to be monitored and maintained on a regular basis so that changes in the work environment that might affect productivity are provided for and dealt with before becoming a problem. If this is done on a regular basis, either by management or by an external review by a consultant, then productivity will be enhanced.

- Colin Butterfield is a partner in Group B Services Ltd., a consulting company specializing in cleaning industry management and training. Productivity 2007, an educational conference and trade show hosted by Group B Services Ltd. will take place in Vancouver in February 2007. Details at www.2007show.groupb.ca.

CHASING PRODUCTIVITY