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Setting health and safety standards during a pandemic - by Rayne Guest

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Building operators have an opportunity to shine during the reopening process.

Welcoming back tenants across cities and countries can be daunting due to strict requirements put in place to protect public health and safety. One key challenge is how to handle disinfection. The CDC recommends using products with the shortest contact time. Operational success comes down to proactive measures taken by decision makers, including their ability to avoid product shortages.

To determine how to best keep properties fully functional and to ensure the safety of visitors and tenants, we need to ask four key questions. The answers should guide us as we develop new protocols and procedures.

How long do the products I am currently using (or considering) take to kill germs?

Spray and wipe is a myth when it comes to disinfection. Every disinfectant has a contact time, which is the time that a product must remain wet on a surface to be effective. Most disinfecting products have a 10-minute contact time and need to be reapplied multiple times to achieve this. The CDC recognizes this as unfeasible; especially in buildings welcoming countless tenants and visitors every day. Can you imagine people using disinfectants correctly and letting them sit wet on surfaces for 10 minutes before wiping them dry? This would hamper operational efficiencies tremendously, yet not using products properly leaves us susceptible to the remaining germs left behind.

As an example, R-Water worked with healthcare facilities to evaluate the time it takes to disinfect a patient room. It was determined by the Environmental Services team, HHS, that replacing a 10-minute product, Virex 256 with a one-minute product, TK60, decreased patient room turn times by 57%. TK60 is a nontoxic, hypoallergenic, healthcare-grade disinfectant, that is also food safe.

How do our plans assure tenants and visitors that we are committed to their health and safety?

You will want to offer tenants and guests a disinfectant they feel safe using. Like carrying our own masks, gloves, and individual hand sanitizers, building tenants will feel safer when they have a sense of control. This will come in the form of a readily available disinfecting product for them to use as they see fit.

Residents and team members at Franklin Park Senior Communities have unhindered access to their disinfectant, TK60. Since implementing it as their one-step healthcare grade disinfectant and giving residents and staff personal bottles for home use, they have seen a significant decrease in the number of flu cases and other respiratory ailments. In one facility, with more than 250 residents and 90 staff members they have reported a 65% decrease in call-outs and sick days.

How can we protect our facility from supply shortages?

Since the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, availability of cleaning and disinfecting products have been increasingly uncertain. These shortages have encouraged innovative managers to look for ways to alleviate the painful scenarios caused by backorders and price gouging. One way building operators are taking matters into their own hands is by implementing advanced cleaning and disinfecting technology that gives them the ability to produce their needed products onsite, eliminating the chemical supply chain altogether.

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