

## Flexible floor-cleaning routine helps school prevent spread of illness



WASHINGTON HIGH SCHOOL	
<b>Location</b>	Sioux Falls, South Dakota, USA
<b>Application</b>	Floor cleaning in Washington High School
<b>Equipment used</b>	Advance scrubber with EcoFlex™ System
<b>Cleaning challenge</b>	Increasing cleaning strength in the school gymnasium to help control the spread of a staph infection

Every day, students in the two gymnasiums at 330,000-square-foot Washington High School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, participate in basketball, wrestling and other activities. Compared to cafeteria tables, doorknobs and desks, the school's floors may not be considered obvious surfaces for exposing students to bacteria. The floors in the two gyms, however, are a constant repository for bodily fluids. Sweaty students dive for loose balls on the basketball courts, grapple opponents on the wrestling mats and participate in other activities that put them in frequent contact with potentially harmful germs and bacteria.

That's why ensuring the gym floors' cleanliness is part of Washington High's daily cleaning routine. The gyms also have become one of the fronts in the effort to stop the spread of diseases, infections and viruses – particularly after a staph bacteria was discovered in the main gym.

Knocking back the recent staph infection required cleaning the main gym's floor with a stronger and less-diluted detergent than Robert Underberg, the school's building manager, typically uses. However, the school's new Advenger® rider-scrubber from Advance, which features the EcoFlex™ System, made accomplishing it an easier proposition. The EcoFlex System allows Underberg to quickly and easily adjust the detergent dilution ratio – or change the type of detergent altogether.

"We may not have needed to increase the detergent ratio at all, but it was simple to do and gave us peace of mind that the staph bacteria wouldn't spread to other students and staff," Underberg said. "We wouldn't have had this option with our old equipment, not without mixing up a whole new batch of detergent and water. We might have done it, but it would have eaten up a big chunk of time."

### Old equipment left school stuck in the same routine

Mixing a new tankful of cleaning solution also would have wasted both detergent and water. While Underberg's impetus for a new auto scrubber was simply that his old one was wearing out, he was well aware that he was wasting detergent, too. The amount of detergent mixed with water in Washington High School's old machine depended entirely on the person doing the mixing. The EcoFlex System has helped Underberg maintain a more sustainable and environmentally responsible cleaning routine because it automatically regulates and dispenses detergent at a ratio he selects.



"In terms of detergent use, more isn't always better, Underberg explains. "You get different people and one will go in and dump three or four 'glugs' of detergent in, and then give it an extra shot or two, and another person will do something different. This way, it's controlled and there is no waste." Underberg says that with the Advenger, he controls the detergent dilution ratio. "If need be, I go in and change the ratio using the EcoFlex System. I've been around 20 years and I know what we need, where we need it and when we need it." To ensure the staph bacteria didn't spread from the hardwood floors in the main gym, for example, Underberg increased the dilution ratio from the regular one ounce of detergent per gallon of water to 1.5 ounces per gallon.

Underberg hasn't had to prevent a specific infection in the school's smaller gymnasium, but that space requires a slightly different cleaning approach. Underberg uses standard detergent when he cleans the rubber floor of the smaller gymnasium. However, since the floor is porous, he ensures it's free of germs and bacteria by increasing the flow rate and pad pressure. The detergent is then able to break the surface tension of water and clean deep into the rubberized flooring's cracks and crevices.

Underberg also utilized the EcoFlex System's "burst of power" button in his efforts to prevent the potential spread of the staph bacteria. This feature allows the operator to increase the scrubber's detergent, flow rate and pad pressure for 60 seconds. In addition to using the burst-of-power button as a preventative measure, Underberg uses it in the school's heavily trafficked common areas.

#### **Ease in changing chemicals helps establish routine**

While Underberg largely follows a regular cleaning routine, he switches between three chemicals – now a much easier task with the EcoFlex System's interchangeable detergent cartridges. He sets the scrubber to dispense the different detergents at the same strength, but rotates between them with the belief that doing so helps prevent different germs and bacteria from gaining hold. "We haven't had the H1N1 issue here yet, and I like to rotate the way we clean because it should help us avoid that problem," Underberg said.

About once a week, Underberg uses no detergents at all and instead scrubs all of the school's floors with just warm water. Doing so activates any detergent residue that is left on the ground and helps remove detergent buildup to restore the original look of the floors.

Whether he's cleaning with only water or using detergent, Underberg's primary objective is to leave behind a floor that looks clean and smells clean. While he never intended for his floor scrubber to be a tool to prevent diseases, infections and viruses, he says using it as such was effective in helping allay fears about the staph infection and in knocking back the bacteria itself.

"It certainly is possible the bacteria wouldn't have spread from the gym floors, even if we cleaned the same way we always do," Underberg said. "But now that we have equipment that gives our cleaning routine more flexibility, we don't even think twice about making decisions like this – especially when it concerns the health of our students and staff."

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By using Advance scrubbers with the EcoFlex™ System, WHS adjusted its cleaning routine to control the spread of a staph infection in its gymnasium.

*"It was simple to do and gave us peace of mind that the staph infection wouldn't spread."*

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