

How Your Staff Can Combat Staph Infections.

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ith college and professional athletes having fallen victim to a potentially deadly

form of methicillin-resistant staphylococcus aureus, or staph infection, commonly called MRSA, cleanliness needs to be a concern in all skating facilities.



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KEEP YOUR LOCKER ROOMS CLEAN & DRY

Cleanliness and the humidity of locker rooms can both be a contributing factor in the spread of staph and MRSA infections. Cleaning locker room areas is critical and needs more attention from arena staff. While more frequent cleaning may not necessarily be the issue, proper cleaning and use of cleaning solutions is critical. The use of EPA-registered products effective against MRSA will keep you in compliance with OSHA's (Occupational Safety and Health Administration) occupational exposure to blood borne pathogens (29 CFR 1910) regulation.

Use selected EPA-registered disinfectants when cleaning locker room and restroom areas. A list of EPA-registered products effective against MRSA is available, are organized alphabetically by product names and by numerical order of their EPA registration numbers. This lengthy list (25 pages) can be downloaded by entering the address http://www.epa.gov/oppad001/list_h_mrsa_vre.pdf into your internet browser.

Make sure the products you are using are on the list, and ask your cleaning chemical supplier to make sure the products you are using for these areas are EPA-registered and carry an EPA number on the label.

Ways to Clean the Areas

No-Touch cleaning is the preferred way of cleaning locker room and shower areas. This type of cleaning uses an indoor pressure washer and wet vacuum. Cleaning equipment manufacturer Kaivac offers a variety of No-Touch Cleaning™ Systems, each combining automatic chemical metering and injection, an indoor pressure washer and a powerful wet vacuum into an integrated system.



The best way to clean locker rooms is using a combination power washer and wet vac. For information on products like these visit www.kaivac.com/products/notouch/

This allows workers to deep clean and sanitize without ever having to touch soiled, contaminated surfaces.

The following are other products that should be considered for the proper cleaning of locker room and restroom areas. Some of these are new, so take the time to research their benefits.

Color-coding technology — This helps prevent cross-contamination by eliminating the use of cleaning tools in areas where they are not intended. A red cloth or tool might be designated for the restroom, while green could be used for the snack bar. This helps to reduce the redistribution of soil and harmful bacteria. This color-coding system is also

part of the bulk cleaning solutions that are used.

Be tool-specific — Floors, counter tops, toilets and urinals should be cleaned with different tools, and toilet brushes should never be used on a toilet's exterior.

Dual-compartment buckets — Separating clean water and cleaning solution from dirty rinse water can help prevent the spread of bacteria. After cleaning, take care to rinse and clean tools and equipment before storing them.

Microfiber mops and cloths — Microfiber cloths have been proven to reduce bacteria by up to 96 percent with their enhanced ability to capture and retain material. To ensure that the right cloth is used for the appropriate task, look for microfiber cloths that are categorized accordingly by a grading system.

Employees Are Key

The training and performance of the cleaning crew in your skating facility must be a priority. Too often we rely on teenagers to clean our locker room areas, and we provide little or no training because — you may simply ask — how hard can it be to run a mop? It's time to review and correct your cleaning operations, especially if it's been a while since you have done so.

Have you held a meeting with your staff about staph and MRSA infections? If not, you need to do so. Ask professionals for help. If you are buying your cleaning supplies from a reputable cleaning supply company, ask them to come in and help train your employees on proper cleaning procedures.

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Suggestions for Safe Cleaning

- Always wear gloves when using any disinfectants.
- Hard surfaces and equipment such as floors, drinking fountains, light switches, door handles, handrails, tables and desks should be cleaned routinely.
- Locker rooms, including any shower areas, should be cleaned daily, if used.
- If soap is furnished, it should be accessible from a wall dispenser.
- Ensure that locker rooms and restrooms all have separate cleaning mops and buckets, and that all mops (use washable microfiber heads or disposable mop cloths) and buckets are cleaned regularly.
- Consider making spray bottles of disinfectant available for patrons and staff to clean frequently touched surfaces of shared equipment between uses, and provide instruction (e.g., new user orientation or posters) for the safe use of disinfectant.

Facility Maintenance – Laundry

- Wash shared linens (e.g., towels, sheets, blankets or uniforms) in detergent and water at 160°F for at least 25 minutes.
- Use a mechanical dryer on hot temperature cycle (i.e., avoid air drying).
- Distribute towels, uniforms, etc. only when they are completely dry.

Keep it Dry!

Keeping the locker room areas dry and the humidity levels down has become more important than ever. Many skating facilities have addressed the humidity concerns in the ice surface area, but what about the locker room areas? If you are unsure of the levels, install a low-cost electronic hydrometer so you can monitor



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Color-code your rags: A red cloth or tool might be designated for the restroom, while blue could be used for the snack bar.

the area. If you do find high humidity levels, you should look at ways to increase airflow and ventilation in the area. Some facilities have installed ductwork that incorporates the dedicated dehumidification system for the ice area to include the locker room area. Depending on the type of dehumidification (desiccant or mechanical), this can be an effective way to help keep this area dry.

In addition to dehumidification systems, many architects also recommend installing fans in locker rooms to increase airflow. The more air movement, the quicker the areas will dry, reducing humidity and the potential for mold, mildew, germs and bacteria.

Also, the addition of radiant heat systems that have been installed in some newer facilities by running heated pipes under the floors of the locker room areas has gone a long way toward keeping these areas clean and dry while using free waste heat from the compressor system.

Floor drains and sloped floors should be used to prevent standing water in any locker room or restroom area. Proper drainage aids in the cleaning of the areas by allowing the use of sprayers and hoses

to wash down the areas.

For buildings that may have a serious problem with bacteria, fungi and odors from athletic equipment and locker room areas there is a new treatment available from CleanZone. It can sanitize locker rooms and workout facilities, freshen and purify the air by using their unique, patent-pending Ozone Generators. This treatment uses UV light to produce the high concentrations of natural ozone necessary to kill bacteria, viruses, molds and other allergens residing in the air and on all surfaces, wet or dry.

For more information go to:
[www.cleanzonesystems.com/
Commercial-Facilities_Athletic.asp](http://www.cleanzonesystems.com/Commercial-Facilities_Athletic.asp)

Awareness for Your Skaters

Hockey players in your facility need to be aware of their part in prevention of staph as well. Dr. Eric Weinstein is an attending emergency physician at Colleton Medical Center in Walterboro, S.C., who recently said in USA Hockey Magazine: "Parents, players, and coaches should be aware of the signs of infection on the body and any concerns should be taken to a physician or team doctor.

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Use microfiber cloth mops to significantly reduce bacteria.



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“There are counter-measures to avoid infections. The first step is to prevent the CA-MRSA from first getting into the body, as well as reducing the amount of total bacteria and CA-MRSA on the body, if it does become attached.

Cleaning hockey gear regularly is one of the best ways to do this.”

Posters for athlete’s areas are available from the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). Use these posters in locker rooms to remind players that the best prevention is their personal hygiene. For posters, visit the link: www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dhqp/ar_mrsa_ca_posters.html#Athletic

It’s Worth the Effort

The cleanliness of a locker room area really hit home for me when I had an adult hockey team come to my facility to play in our league. When we asked them why they were changing rinks, their main reason was the lack of cleaning and unsanitary conditions of the locker rooms at the rink they were skating at.

Remember that new customers, as well as your regular customers, will have an expectation of cleanliness for your facility. Since the locker room area is a very important part of any skating facility, put in the effort to exceed this expectation and it will result in happier customers and more customers in the future. ★