

AGED CARE INDUSTRY INSIGHTS- VOL 1

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**What are the top cleaning
challenges and solutions
within Aged Care?**

eBook



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Introduction

Demand for Aged Care services in Australia continues to rise as a generation enters their golden years.



While in-home assistance options are being expanded, live-in facilities can be expected to continue to meet a large portion of this ever-growing need for aged care. Facilities that have impeccable cleaning standards will shine when it comes to impressing discerning decision makers.

The need to keep aged care facilities clean and sanitised is more important than ever. An outbreak in a senior living centre or nursing home can wreak havoc on a vulnerable population, and once a contagious infection has taken hold in such a facility, it can be extremely difficult to stop. Cleaning in aged care facilities requires thoroughly trained staff and the right cleaning supplies for use in what is ultimately a healthcare facility.

Challenges of Cleaning in Aged Care

The challenges of high quality cleaning in aged care differ somewhat from those experienced in either a home or a standard medical facility.

Commercial cleaning services or simple janitorial staff may not be equipped to deal with the additional detritus a residential care environment produces. For Aged Care providers, recognising that cleaning is not simply an ancillary service, but an integral part of community health, is key. The aged are uniquely vulnerable to disease and maintaining a clean environment should be a priority.



Challenges of Cleaning in Aged Care

However, certain circumstances can present unique challenges to these healthcare providers:



The need for daytime cleaning

While many building managers can shift a majority of cleaning tasks to off hours, an aged care institution, like a medical facility, **requires cleaning to be done continually**. This can be difficult, as cleaners attempt to navigate around elderly residents and staff, and cope with complaints about harshly scented chemicals. Routes must be carefully planned, access to electrical outlets and layout of cords managed, and patience employed as work may be interrupted by an incident at any moment.



The possibility of an unexpected visit to check compliance

An aged care facility is held to **incredibly high cleaning standards** and subject to audits and unannounced visits. It is imperative that all cleaning tasks be completed routinely, and the quality of record keeping must be pristine. Failure to comply with exacting regulations can have severe consequences.



Waste Management

In facilities with nursing care, medical and human waste is an added hazard. Cleaning contaminated areas and linens should be carried out promptly, and cleaning cloths immediately secured in plastic bags for transport to waste disposal (or the laundry, if reusable).



Untrained cleaning staff

A janitorial department not trained to handle the complexities presented by aged care can fail to meet standards. Spills, incontinence and other issues can cause dismay at a traditionally trained janitorial worker. Specialised training can assist them in learning the required practices, but compliance can be difficult without added oversight. Improper cleaning by improperly trained staff is an added risk factor in aged care facilities.



Resident interference

in an aged care facility servicing dementia patients, the challenges increase. Chemicals must be carefully watched to avoid damages to the elderly, who may not realise they are touching something they shouldn't. Cleaning equipment will need to be likewise monitored- a rolling bucket left unattended in a hallway could have serious consequences.

Aged Care Cleaning Solutions

Proper cleaning of an aged care facility can be accomplished by looking for solutions to common challenges, then implementing them and providing training for all cleaning staff.

Make daytime cleaning easier



Select cleaning options that won't be irritating to people in the surrounding areas, such as microfibre cloths and mopheads, and equipment that is easy to navigate in spaces that may be crowded.

Provide specific training if the facility houses dementia patients, and demand that all supplies and equipment be accounted for at all times. Also educate staff on potential scenarios that can arise in a residential setting, to ensure they will react safely and appropriately

Ensure compliance with easy record keeping



Give essential cleaning staff ownership of record keeping, and provide forms and systems to facilitate ease of documentation. This can help when audits are performed and allow compliance to be proven during unannounced site visits.

Aged Care Cleaning Solutions

Waste management solutions

Invest in supplies and equipment to make dealing with medical or biowaste a streamlined process.

Determine if disposable or reusable cleaning options will provide the best service, taking into account the facility's laundry capacity and the added requirements for cleaning contaminated materials.

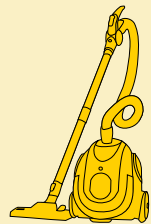


Aged Care Cleaning Solutions

Eliminate inappropriate cleaning equipment or practices



Dusters can disrupt and disperse microorganisms and should be replaced with a cloth dampened with water or a mild cleaning agent.



Vacuum cleaners do the same, and should be fitted with approved HEPA filters (which must be regularly checked and replaced).



Used cloths cannot be double-dipped into clean solution without spreading contamination, and should instead be dipped when clean, wrung out then rotated and folded to present a clean surface before each pass over a dirty surface.

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Conclusion



Aged care is a closed environment.

By meeting challenges with well thought out preventive solutions and implementing strict adherence to stringent cleaning practices, facility managers can help avoid serious health hazards.



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