



MEETING THE DEMAND

When asked by a client to incorporate a mechanical cleaning unit in its janitorial service, Eurest Services found the perfect solution in Hydro Systems' ICS 8900

By Chris Torry

When Eurest Services was awarded the contract to provide janitorial services for the plant and business space for an internationally known industrial manufacturer's facility in the Urbana, OH, area, it was not a surprise. After all, Eurest Services—which has its roots in the United Kingdom while its North American operation was formed in 1996—is affiliated with Wayne, PA-based Crothall Services Group, which provides support and janitorial services to more than 1,400 clients.

On top of that, Eurest Services is a member of Compass Group PLC. Based in the United Kingdom, with North American operations headquartered in Charlotte, NC, Compass Group—which has made its name as a provider of food and support services to customers in the workplace since 1941—currently operates in 64 countries and has more than 360,000 employees around the globe.

So, to say that Eurest Services would be offering the best in support services to its new client would not be an exaggeration. But when the client insisted that mechanical, rather than hands-on, cleaning be the mode employed in the daily sanitation of the plant and its business spaces, most specifically the restrooms, Eurest Services had some research to do.

“We took over the cleaning contract at the plant in December (2007),” said Thom Bradford, a Site

Supervisor with Eurest Services. “Previously, I was the site supervisor for the other company that ran the janitorial services at the plant. When we won the contract for the Urbana site, our client requested that we use a mechanical cleaning unit.”

The question then became, which one?

A New Trend

In recent years, the use of mechanical cleaning units in restrooms has been trending upward, with some market estimates showing that automatic cleaning may approach 40% of the market by 2010 after standing at just 10% in 2007. This is due to a number of factors. Chief among them may be that mechanical cleaning units eliminate the need for the often-unpleasant hands-on restroom cleaning that has traditionally been required, a mode of cleaning that can result in less-than-satisfactory sanitation methods employed by a less-than-properly-motivated cleaning staff. Mechanical cleaning units also reduce the amount of physical toll on the cleaning staff that is found in the bending, squatting and scrubbing inherent in traditional hands-on or mop-and-bucket cleaning.

The other benefits of mechanical cleaning units come in the areas of time and cost savings. Since the cleaning chemicals in a cleaning unit are properly dosed through the use of a push-button system, gone are the days of haphazard measuring or “eyeballing” of chemicals as they are added to

mop and wash buckets, which equates to a cost savings. Also, according to ISSA 447 Cleaning Times, the use of a mechanical cleaning unit can cut fixture-cleaning times by as much as 65%, again resulting in cost reduction.

So, faced with having to provide daily cleaning and sanitation service to a large, 500-employee complex replete with 32 restrooms at the plant facility with another 16 spread amongst two nearby office buildings, Bradford needed to find an automatic cleaning unit that offered reliable, time- and cost-sensitive cleaning ability, along with the mobility to be transported and used at various locations.

“This is a fairly large complex with two other buildings in the Urbana area,” he said. “It’s also a daily, Monday-through-Friday job handled by six people we have on staff, five of whom work 40 hours a week, with the sixth person being part-time. We needed something that would be easy to operate and train our people on, while also providing top-of-the-line cleaning ability.”

And when the decision was made, Bradford and Eurest Services chose to purchase an ICS 8900 mobile integrated cleaning system manufactured by Cincinnati-based Hydro Systems Co. In just three short months of use, the results have been noteworthy.

“We got the ICS 8900 unit about mid-January and it’s doing everything they said it would do,” said Bradford. “At the Urbana location, the machine takes care of everything I want it to take care of. We’ve already cut 25% off the cleaning time in a restroom.”

What It Is

Hydro Systems, the leading independent manufacturer of proportioning, dosing and dispensing systems for concentrated chemicals, and an industry leader in automatic/touch-free cleaning systems for daily cleaning applications,

created the ICS 8900 as a best-in-class solution for touch-free cleaning of restrooms, locker/shower rooms, etc.

The ICS 8900 is an affordable, battery-powered, self-contained portable-cleaning system that uses correctly dosed cleaning chemicals that are applied by spray nozzle using low-flow/low-pressure technology. With the ICS 8900, the chemicals do the cleaning, not high pressure. The 8900 generates less than 100 psi, which protects fixtures and grout from water damage, reduces the risk of the user inhaling atomized bacteria, and eliminates the spray-back of bacteria-contaminated water, all of which may occur with high-pressure (500+ psi) cleaning systems. The design and operation of the ICS 8900 also supports ongoing efforts to eliminate from public restrooms the bacteria that causes staph infections.

The ICS 8900’s unique low-flow design uses only half-a-gallon of cleaning solution per minute, eliminating the need for wet/dry-vac recovery and the handling of contaminated water, while at the same time reducing the slip-and-fall risk. Utilizing Hydro Systems’ proven select-valve technology, cleaning and sanitizing chemicals are correctly dosed every time, effectively and consistently killing germs and toxins, particularly in hard-to-reach and often-overlooked areas.

In addition, the ICS 8900 is kind to the environment, with 50-percent less water and chemicals used when compared with many other automated cleaning systems. The ICS 8900 operates on a rechargeable, maintenance-free 12V lead-acid battery, allowing the user to clean anywhere, regardless of power-outlet availability. It also has an on-board battery charger and battery-life indicator. The compact design and simple operation of the ICS 8900 eliminates complicated and time-consuming setup and breakdown, and its virtually silent operation also means the user can clean at any time, making it easier to manage daily cleaning schedules.

Operation is as simple as filling the unit's 12-gallon water tank, using the selector valve to choose any of up to four different chemicals to be dispensed, and applying the cleaning solution with the low-flow/low-pressure spray nozzle. After cleaning, the solution is rinsed away with water from the spray nozzle. Any remaining liquid can be maneuvered into a floor drain with a squeegee or mopped dry. An optional foaming nozzle is available to clean vertical surfaces where chemicals need longer dwell time to deliver maximum cleaning effectiveness. This is ideal for shower and locker-room applications.

It's A Multi-Tasker

In addition to the reduction in cleaning time per restroom that has already been realized through the use of the ICS 8900, another benefit that Bradford has noted is the cost savings associated with the reduced amount of chemicals that are being used in the cleaning process.

"With the dispensing system on the ICS 8900, we can take the chemicals we're using for a specific operation, look up the dilution ratio and change the nozzle tips for different dilutions for different chemicals," Bradford explained. "It's not a guessing process anymore where you have somebody dropping two cups of chemical in a bucket of water. It's more precise and saves money on chemicals in the long run."

Since the ICS 8900 weighs only 85 pounds and is battery-operated, it can be easily transported to the clients' various facilities.

"We can just transport it on an inner-plant truck," Bradford said. "Since it's battery-operated, I'm not limited by, or tied to, an electrical cord."

In addition to its intended use as an ultra-efficient floor-to-ceiling restroom cleaner, Bradford has also found many other uses for the ICS 8900 unit—with more still to come.

"We use it in other applications, like pre-spotting and pre-wetting a carpet before using an extracting machine," he said. "We also use it on bare-surface floors to put down chemicals that are used to clean or recoat the floor. One thing I haven't done with it yet, but want to do, with the new anti-smoking regulations, we have smoking shacks outside the facility. I can take the ICS 8900 outside and spray the shack down and clean it up. It's just more convenient to use the machine in these other applications; since I have it and it can do the job, I use it."

So when Eurest Services—a member of the well-respected Compass Group PLC—chooses the ICS 8900 from among an increasingly cluttered group of options in mechanical cleaning, it's safe to say that the cleanliness of the clients' restrooms is pointed in the right direction.

Chris Torry is the ICS Sales Manager for Cincinnati, OH-based Hydro Systems Co., the world's largest independent manufacturer of proportioning, dosing and dispensing systems for concentrated chemicals, serving the janitorial, institutional, foodservice, commercial cleaning, industrial and automotive-care markets.

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