



Compatible Combat

In the fight against infections, it's important to keep surface material compatibility in mind

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Thorough and effective surface disinfection is top-of-mind in any infection prevention program, but there is one crucial element that can be challenging to implement in today's fast-paced, rapidly changing healthcare environment – one that plays a key role in maximizing patient safety, surface material performance, and device maintenance.

This crucial factor is surface material compatibility, or the ability of material to be exposed to a disinfectant's chemistry without exhibiting reduced functionality as a result. Compatibility ensures that a materi-

al's chemical resistance aligns with a disinfectant's particular chemical profile, allowing a healthcare facility's surfaces and devices to be properly cleaned and maintained while maximizing the surface material's performance over time.

When overlooked or administered improperly, cleaning procedures can lead to more rapid wear and tear, a situation with serious implications for infection prevention and healthcare facilities overall.

To improve infection prevention through compatibility, facilities should consider a two-pronged

approach in order to implement procedural change that can lead to real results. First, acquire a more thorough understanding of how to balance expectations around cleaning and disinfection with compatibility considerations. Second, educate and empower the staff responsible for cleaning each surface.

Not All Disinfectants Are Created Equally

Compatibility has recently risen to the forefront as tighter regulations

to improve patient safety have resulted in an increased frequency of surface disinfecting. In addition, facilities are required to comply with CDC recommendations on how often healthcare facility surfaces should be disinfected. As a result, facilities are demanding high-performing surface materials with increased chemical resistance, so that disinfectants can kill more, faster.

Problems with compatibility can result in issues that have a profound impact on devices, the facility, and the patient.

Incompatibility can lead to cracks where bacteria can hide. The breakdown of the surface material can also accelerate the pace of depreciation, putting crucial devices out of commission when they are needed to treat patients. The need to replace the devices can result in increased costs to the customer in the long run.

This interaction between surface material polymer and disinfectant chemistries is important, as not all formulations are compatible with all surfaces. There are also more disinfecting formula options than ever before, each with its own usage recommendations, but only a relatively small number have been tested and approved specifically for the devices on which they are used.

Implementing And Safeguarding Compatibility

There are a number of steps that healthcare facilities can take to improve overall adherence to the correct disinfecting protocols.

Thorough training on the precise cleaning or maintenance instructions for each device and corresponding disinfectant is critical. This should include any staff responsible for cleaning surfac-



PDI has conducted in-house compatibility testing of the Sani-Cloth brand germicidal disposable wipes on common surface materials found within the healthcare environment.

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es, such as nurses, technicians, central processing, or EVS. The better-informed personnel are, the more likely that personnel can efficiently complete cleaning tasks.

Healthcare facilities should also engage with disinfectant providers to ensure compatibility needs are being met with product offerings. At the same time, they should work with device manufacturers to encourage continued compatibility testing on disinfectants carried by the facility.

By taking the time to consider and promote compatibility, healthcare facilities can deliver safe and productive administration of care. This careful attention to a rapidly changing healthcare landscape will ensure that efficiencies remain in place, establishing the highest possible standard of care. **SP**