

Success With Sweepers

Selecting superior sweeping solutions showcasing strength and style can solidify staffs' sapiency.

By [Daniel Frimml](#)
January 10, 2013

Given the variety of flooring options in use today, floor care for a large facility can be complex.

Twenty-four-hour businesses add another layer of complexity, as cleaning crews must work around clientele and other building occupants with minimal disturbance.



While there are many instances when these two major challenges come together, a prime example is in a casino.

Generally speaking, casinos have no down time when housekeepers and custodial workers can clean without coming into contact with guests.

They also typically have both soft and hard surface flooring that may need to be cleaned several times throughout the course of the day.

Just imagine all the problems this could cause if, for instance, a conventional or even wide-area vacuum cleaner was used.

There are four common problems of conventional vacuum cleaners:

1. The first problem is the cord

Most casinos are huge; even a 50-foot cord would prove of little value in a large casino.

2. The second problem is the issue of safety

Casinos receive a tremendous amount of foot traffic; with scores of people walking by at any time, cords could easily cause a slip-and-fall incident or be another major safety concern.

3. The third problem is noise

Most vacuum cleaners produce more than 70 decibels of sound; while this is tolerable, studies indicate that audible notes of 70 decibels or above are annoyingly loud to most people, especially over time.

4. The fourth problem is the variation of flooring surfaces

While casinos may have acres of carpeted floors, they also have huge amounts of hard surface flooring; choosing a floor cleaning system that can clean both carpets and hard surfaces is ideal.

Choosing an option that can solve the four aforementioned problems can help cut equipment costs, minimize the need for training and improve worker productivity significantly in casinos and similar types of settings.

In fact, many casino managers — along with facilities managers in locations ranging from airports and schools to factories and cruise ships — are now considering the use of battery-powered sweepers.

Sweepers use brushes, vacuum systems and filters to collect dirt, debris and dust from floor surfaces.

While these systems are not new, they have received more attention in recent years because the new generation of systems are getting quieter, more effective, more versatile, easier to use and are considered greener than systems developed just a few years ago.

Specifications For Selecting A Sweeper

Sweepers are far less complicated machines than carpet extractors or autoscrubbers; but, this does not mean they are all alike.

Some sweepers are ride-on systems, some have more features than others, some are easier to use than others, some are more versatile and some are better for use in certain types of settings – an industrial location versus a retail store, for example.



The first thing buyers need to ascertain when choosing a sweeper is where the machine will be used, what types of surfaces it will need to clean and what types of soils will be encountered.

Sweepers work well to remove items such as paper, dust, sand, popcorn, paper clips, food crumbs and so on from carpeting and hard surface floors.

These versatile machines can often handle debris and objects that would be too large for a typical vacuum cleaner to safely and effectively remove.

Purchasers should next consider whether they would be better served by a ride-on model or a walk-behind offering.

While walk-behind sweepers typically serve most purposes, ride-on sweepers can improve worker productivity when used in appropriate settings.

Cleaning experts often suggest using a ride-on sweeper if the area to be cleaned is larger than 50,000 square feet.

However, there are other variables that must also be considered.

In most cases, a walk-behind sweeper is more appropriate when cleaning aisles or walkways that are less than six feet wide.

This is because ride-on systems may not be compact or nimble enough to maneuver through such areas, especially when furniture, fixtures or people are also present.

Supplements For Structured Sweeping

In addition to being less complicated than extractors or autoscrubbers, sweepers tend to have fewer components; but, making sure you have the right components can make a big difference in how versatile and effective the machine is.

For instance, when selecting a walk-behind system, users should look for machines that offer:

- A side brush that increases the cleaning width of the machine and facilitates cleaning under furniture, allows for edge and corner cleaning and assists in pulling and collecting debris to be deposited into the collection bin
- A cylindrical brush – what some call a main broom – to grab and pitch debris into the collection bin as the vacuum system draws in dust and finer particulates
- Dust control filters to protect indoor air quality (IAQ) and promote an overall healthier indoor environment
- A top-loading debris collector – as opposed to a front-loading debris collector – that can minimize dumping frequencies and help improve worker productivity
- An on-board battery charger to minimize down time and help increase productivity
- Manual height adjustment, which allows the machine to tackle different flooring types and a variety of debris.
- The correct cleaning width, as a machine that is too wide will be difficult to maneuver and one that is too small will require additional passes to clean the floor area, hampering worker productivity.

Another consideration, regardless of whether you're selecting a walk-behind sweeper or a ride-on system, is the machine's noise level.

Over long periods of time, noise can be fatiguing and annoying, which can impact worker morale and output.

Further, when used in a 24-hour facility or in day cleaning situations, quieter machines are always better.

Some sweepers produce noise levels less than that of a typical conversation, making them relatively quiet and largely nondisruptive; these models should be considered first when noise issues are a concern.

The Simplicity Of Servicing Sweepers

Because walk-behind sweepers are not complicated machines, their maintenance and care is generally minimal; but, this does not mean that they are maintenance-free.



The waste container should be dumped after each use.

If liquids or moist debris have been collected, the container should be wiped clean using an all-purpose cleaner and a microfiber cloth.

The side brush and the main cylindrical brush should always be checked after each use to make sure no debris is hindering the movement of the brushes because work more effectively when clean.

Some sweepers are designed with relatively easy access to their batteries and motor, making it less difficult to service the system's components and allowing for quicker and less costly repairs.

As to a sweeper's power source, some of these systems now use absorbed glass mat (AGM) batteries.

AGM varieties require little or no maintenance and are considered safer and more environmentally responsible than conventional batteries.