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SPRING CLEANING TIPS FOR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

6 top tips to ensure effective spring cleaning in schools, colleges, and universities.

By Kirk Hanley

As the weather warms, flowers emerge, and the trees start to green up, it's the perfect time for a fresh start – and that means spring cleaning. But, if you're the facilities manager for a college, university, high school, or other educational institution, you have a bigger job ahead of you than most. Let's take a look at some ways you can enhance the appearance of your facility after the long winter and prepare for the hot summer ahead by getting proactive with your cleaning and maintenance.

Work your way up from floors and carpets

The winter months can be especially hard on carpets – even commercial grade floor coverings. Moisture, mud, and debris get dragged in by students all winter long on their shoes, boots, and even bicycles, then ground deep into the pile. This not only causes the carpet to look dingy, but can create long-term damage through its abrasive effects. That's why spring is one of the best times to have your commercial carpet deep cleaned to leave it looking renewed and extend its life. Spring is also a great time for schools to schedule the annual summer maintenance of their gym floor to protect the wooden surface and make it shine.

Sitting pretty with clean furniture

Don't overlook your facility's furnishings in your spring-cleaning efforts. All the extra dirt and moisture that makes its way inside in the winter also impacts the appearance and life of the furniture in the faculty offices and common areas of your dorms. Whether you have upholstered or leather furniture, a professional cleaning will leave it looking vibrant. And remember to move desks, file cabinets, credenzas, and large conference tables to get rid of the dust bunnies that may exacerbate spring allergies.

Cleaning windows makes a clear difference

A film of dirt, grime, and salt has likely built up over the winter on the many windows on campus. That residue not only makes the exterior of your building look dingy, but blocks a surprising amount of natural

light from entering classrooms and offices. For best results, be sure to clean both the exteriors and interiors of all your windows to let your school pride really shine.

Wash away the last vestiges of winter

After the final snowfall of the season, parking lots, sidewalks, and patios have a corrosive buildup of salt and sand. Spring is the ideal time to pressure wash your walkways, parking lots, and hardscaping. And while you're at it, wash away the mold, mildew, graffiti, and bird droppings from walls and roof extensions like awnings and overhangs as well.

Check your HVAC to beat the heat

As the temperature rises, it will soon be time to turn on the air conditioning in your school, so you'll want to perform preventative maintenance on the mechanical system to make sure it's in top working order. Cleaning the coils and heat exchangers removes grime and oxidation film to keep units running smoothly and efficiently, and can even help extend the lifespan of your equipment. You'll also want to clean all your vents and ducts to remove dust, mold, and even pest infestations from all those dark nooks and crannies.

Green up this spring

There's never been a better time to go green by taking a healthy and sustainable approach to cleaning. Winners of the 2017 Green Cleaning Award for Schools and Universities had a number of innovative ideas. The Grand Prize Winner, Lake Washington School District, for example, reduced the number of cleaning chemicals it uses by nearly half, and now uses just four core chemicals to perform routine cleaning. In addition, all four chemicals are dispensed as an ultra-concentrated product that reduces waste and water use.

Summer will be here before you know it, so it's time to make your spring cleaning checklist and get scrubbing so your school is truly the top in its class! ■