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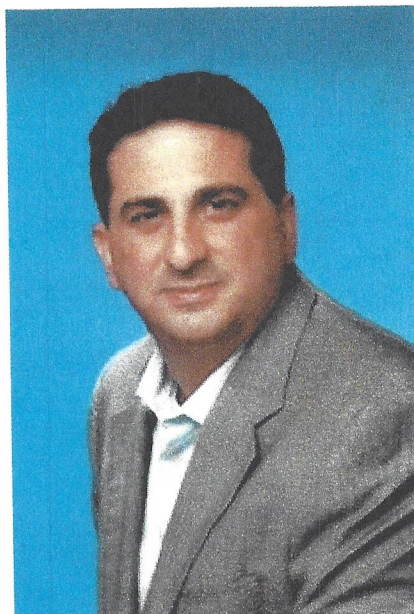
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CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE PARTNERS WITH CLEAN THE WORLD TO ASSIST IN GLOBAL SOAP RECYCLING INITIATIVE



Factoring Laundry Hygiene in Risk Reduction

By Joseph Ricci (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/joseph-ricci-a02324/>)

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When a business receives a delivery of textiles from its outsourced linen or uniform service, the receiver relies on sensory perception to assess these items' cleanliness. In most industries, passing such sight and smell tests clears the textiles for serving customers or employees. In other businesses, management requires proof of hygiene. Linen and uniform services expect this range of industries to grow and are ready to meet this emerging demand for certified textile cleanliness.

High Demand from Healthcare

Hospital infection prevention and environmental services professionals set the precedent for hygiene scrutiny. As the 21st century began, U.S. linen services that pick up, wash and deliver healthcare textiles (either renting the linen to the hospital or washing the hospital's owned linen inventory) focused on comforting these professionals regarding laundry processes. Certification began with extensive third-party inspections of laundry facilities that sought to confirm the use of their best practices in handling soiled items, washing, drying, ironing and trucking.



Now, at the dawn of the 2020s, healthcare textile cleanliness needs to be quantified as well as qualified. Hospital infection prevention personnel currently demand a certification process that conducts textile hygiene testing as well as inspects laundries. These professionals also want to personally inspect laundries as well. They don't have evidence that laundry or linen practices compromise their facilities' cleanliness; they simply seek proof that the already infinitesimally small risk of such difficulty is being reduced as much as possible.

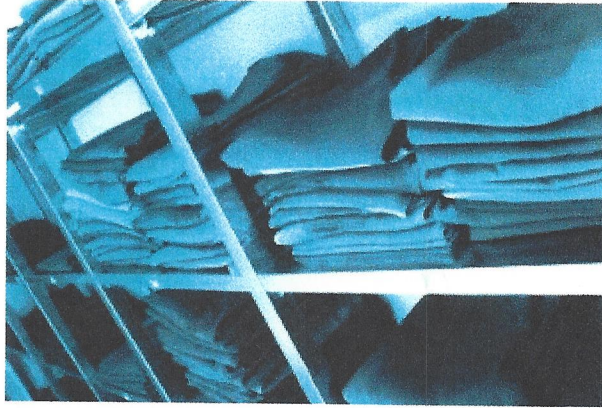
Applying to Other Textile Users

Your industry or profession could be next, particularly if food is handled. Workwear such as smocks, kitchen shirts or chef and butcher coats has no record of contributing to foodborne illness, but food safety professionals are delighted that our organization has begun to certify uniform service laundries. Like their contemporaries in healthcare, these customers are focused on eliminating risk. We have also introduced certifications with laundry inspections and microbial testing of textiles for serving food service (restaurant) and hospitality (hotel) establishments. Demand for these latter two is growing slowly. That reflects the tiny risk of an incident in these businesses, a risk level smaller than healthcare and food manufacturing or processing, but larger than most.

Still, it's understandable that hygiene professionals in any business would want commercially laundered textiles used in their operations to be clean and practical. Surgical suites and cleanroom manufacturing environments bear the expense of achieving extreme textile cleanliness.

Quantifying Textile Cleanliness

In North America, we were behind the international curve in answering this call to upgrade laundry hygiene scrutiny until this decade. For more than 40 years prior to TRSA's introduction of this concept to North America in 2011, linen and uniform services in various European and Asian countries had measured the microbiological content of their "destination textiles" for compliance with universal standards. These require killing bacteria such as *E. coli*, *S. aureus*, *Candida albicans* and more. In addition, levels of acceptable total microbiological content of such laundered textiles had been in place for hotels, hospitals, food processing/businesses and long-term care homes.



If yours is not one of these businesses, what cleanliness standard should apply to it? Given the negligible risk outside the four industries described above, our organization has yet to adapt a general industry standard. This could change as risk management in all businesses becomes a greater concern. In the meantime, we point to our European counterparts, who recommend applying their hotel standard to general trade/industry. They apply this certification to any business user of terry towels, workwear, protective clothing and equipment, floor mats or wiping cloths.

To learn more, see our hospitality standard (<https://hygienicallyclean.org/hygienically-clean-hospitality/>) and if you wish to tour a linen or uniform service laundry, see our guide for visiting (<https://www.trsa.org/document-request-plant-tours-healthcare-professionals/>) such facilities that serve healthcare customers. It refers to some equipment specific to this type of laundry but outlines the steps in processing and cleaning all outsourced laundries follow.

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