

# Why Office Cleaning Should Be a Part of Your Business Routine

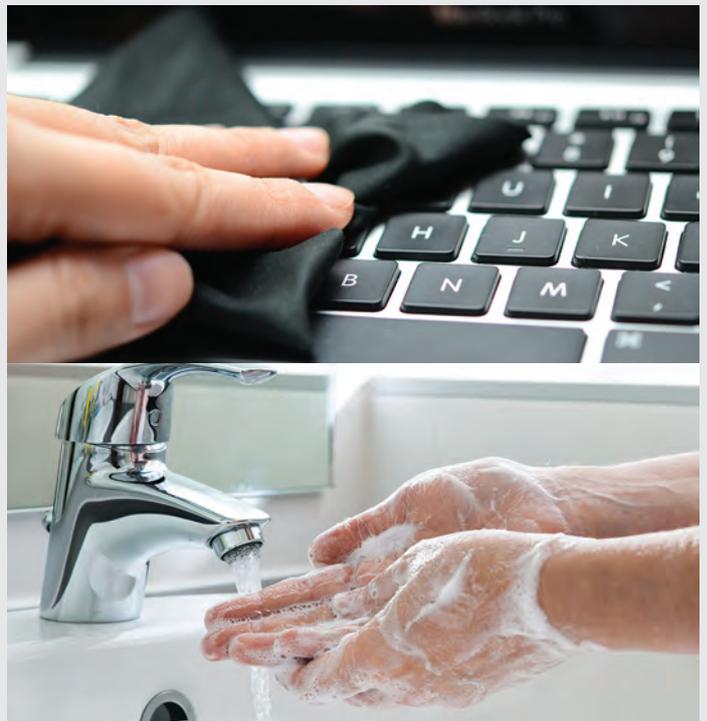
By Sam D Goddard

After touching the office microwave handle the majority of people eat. After touching the office coffeepot or water cooler, the majority of office workers take a drink. After touching a door handle, printer, or copier, the majority of people head back to their office and touch their personal keyboard, mouse, desk and telephone. The very same desk they touch is where they head with their microwave food or their coffee, or where they sit down for an afternoon snack. It may even be where they habitually eat their lunch, unaware that touching any one of these office hotspots has exposed them to a concentration of germs that may surpass 20,000 per square inch (for reference, the bathroom toilet seat has about 50 germs in that same square inch). How can so many office workers be unwittingly living in such squalor? The answer is simple: it's invisible.

Unfortunately for the neat and tidy, appearances are quite deceiving when it comes to the average office. Even though there may not be obvious filth, the majority of offices hire cleaning services that do the bare minimum. The cleaners sweep or vacuum the floors, take out the trash, and brush away the dust. The downside of maintaining this superficially neat appearance is that germs like bacteria and viruses are living, uninterrupted, on the office equipment that gets touched the most. These germs can live for up to three days, making for a veritable hotbed of illness and disease. The average company loses at least thousands of rands each year with employees out sick, so it seems like spending a little extra on sanitation is just plain good business.



Much of the germ infestation could be prevented if every single coworker washed his or her hands for 20 seconds with warm soap and water 3 to 4 times a day. Much more could be prevented if all those sick people just stayed home for a day instead of coming in and germing up the office. However, the majority, 99% of germs, can be eliminated by simply taking a minute or two each day to wipe down each individual's workspace with a disinfectant wipe! Keeping a hand sanitizer right on the desk can also help, but it's important to remember to use it each and every time something on the desk is touched. It may even be a good idea to use an



airborne disinfectant spray several times a day. For those interested in preventing colds and flues this season, these measures are the next best thing to working from home

How can office cleaning be incorporated into each individual's business routine? The very first step is to start the day disinfected. Washing hands after commuting and before entering the office is extremely helpful, as is wiping down the keyboard, mouse, and the phone (the spot with the most germs) before getting started for the day. Common areas should be disinfected on a daily basis, especially hot spots like printer or copier buttons, or coffeepot and microwave handles. If having a hard time getting coworkers to cooperate, there's nothing like a friendly email full of scary stats to break the ice (think E-coli in the candy dish kind of scary). The bottom line is, if office cleaning isn't a part of the daily business routine, spreading dangerous germs and illnesses is!