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Feature: Wiping off the cost of maintenance

Industrial strength wipes can be a part of your overall cost saving strategy when it comes to housing association management and maintenance teams, explains Corinna Palin, International Marketing Manager of [Big Wipes](#).

According to the latest Health and Safety Executive (HSE) figures available, there are over 20,000 people suffering from work-related skin diseases with around 7,000 new cases diagnosed every year. For many managed services teams, therefore, cleaning hands effectively while still being able to care for them is extremely important.

On a daily basis, service teams and contractors looking after the building and maintenance of housing association properties have to deal with both the grease and grime of current or previous tenants. In addition, they need to keep themselves and the work area clean of fix and repair products including silicone sealants, paints, adhesives, PU foam and general dirt – which can be hard to remove. It is vital to protect both personnel and the properties from these potentially aggressive substances.

Industrial strength wipes help to solve a health and safety issue for maintenance teams. Speedy removal of irritants is essential as skin disease on the hands can be debilitating and has serious implications when trying to continue with work. The skin is your body's largest organ and is its protective barrier. However, if harmful substances accumulate on your skin, that barrier can be broken and leave hands sore and inflamed and with the potential to cause long-term health issues. Skin disease can be incapacitating for the sufferer, meaning that work becomes difficult and livelihoods are put in jeopardy.

There are common signs of skin problems to look for on hands such as dryness, redness, cracking or swelling of the hands and fingers as well as blisters, flaking and itching. Workers can develop these symptoms as they come into direct contact with substances commonly used on site. If you are immersing your hands in liquids, or getting them splashed on a regular basis then your hands may suffer. Contact with contaminated tools or surfaces can also lead to harmful substances landing on the skin, causing a problem.

Industrial strength wipes should contain a blend of cosmetic grade solvents to effectively remove the grime, plus have added skin conditioners combining antibacterial properties that can offer a comprehensive level of portable protection in one convenient package. The wipes are highly effective, economical, safe for use on hands, tools and all sealed surfaces.

These industrial grade wipes combined with the same liquid formulation offered in a convenient trigger spray can clean and degrease a whole property including uPVC windows and older runs of silicone. The same wipes can then be used to keep the service teams free of grime while they work. Industrial strength wipes help to solve a health and safety issue and save housing management and maintenance teams significant costs. Paints, adhesive and sealants are easy to over-apply or can be kicked over by accident, causing visual, and sometimes permanent, damage to hard floors, walls and furniture.

These spills and leaks become costly if teams are snagging after a building's refurbishment, or if they are preparing HA properties, getting them into an acceptable condition before new tenants arrive. A spill or accidental leak of any material at this stage can lead to complaints, costly call backs or a delay in a job being signed off as complete which could all combine to impact on the contractor's reputation. The use of industrial strength wipes can save local authority maintenance departments thousands of pounds in lost time by quickly clearing spills before they cause permanent damage and potential call backs. For maintenance teams, therefore, portable cleaning products are their first line of insurance against complaints, extra costs, spillages and even skin damage.

Cost savings even extend to reduced cost of replacing and laundering work wear, as hands pre-cleaned with industrial wipes are no longer a grime hazard to clothing. Vans and vehicles also stay in better condition if a tub of wipes is mounted in racking or in a Big Wipes van bracket, as the work place grime can be removed before it enters the cab. This also has the added benefit of your team arriving clean and ready for their next job.

Companies which specialise in industrial strength wipes create preservative-free and mainly water-based formulas. In addition to four powerful cleaning agents, Big Wipes 4x4 contain four dermatologically tested skin conditioners: Aloe Vera, Lanolin, Vitamin E and Glycerine - all helping to nourish and protect the skin. The range has been assessed to the latest EU Regulation 1223/2009 for cosmetic products with zero levels of irritation recorded during controlled testing by dermatologists. It also offers >99.9% antibacterial protection for your skin. All Big Wipes are used without water and thus are perfect for on-site use where water isn't available.

Taking into account the health and safety implications of getting rid of grime and as part of the cleaning solution package Big Wipes now provides for managed services companies, a hand cream is also available. Solvents, paints and varnishes all strip the skin of its natural oils and can be difficult to avoid when working out on site.

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