

Disposal Concerns with Matting Systems

by Christopher Tricozzi

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Many facility owners/managers and cleaning professionals are unaware that when cleaning products are evaluated to determine if they are environmentally preferable, one consideration is the lifespan of the product.

How long will it last? The longer the product lasts, the less waste will be added to overcrowded landfills and the fewer natural resources needed to construct a replacement, making it more sustainable.

In the United States, we generate over 160 million tons of municipal waste each year—three to five pounds per person per day. Approximately 10 percent of that amount is recycled, 10 percent is burned, and the remaining 80 percent is simply “landfilled.”

According to green-cleaning expert Stephen Ashkin, president of the Ashkin Group, as much as 500 million pounds of cleaning tools and equipment are manufactured every year, ostensibly to replace tools and equipment that have reached the end of their useful life and been sent off to landfills.

Such waste is causing a variety of problems, key among them: we are running out of landfill space. Additionally, one of the most serious environmental impacts of landfill waste disposal is contamination of local groundwater.

Long Life Matting Systems

That is why facility owners/managers and cleaning professionals should always consider the life expectancy of a cleaning or building product when making their product selections. And when it comes to selecting matting systems, one way to help reduce the need for landfills and help protect the environment is by selecting high-performance mats.

Inexpensively constructed or poor-quality mats, although often less costly to purchase than high-performance mats, have a very short life expectancy and thus must be replaced more often. Some are actually designed to have just a 90- to 180-day performance life.

On the other hand, many high-performance matting systems last so long that they offer extended warranties of three to as many as six years. This means that 1 high-

performance mat may eliminate the need to install more than 25 conventional mats—not only a significant cost savings to property owners but a major step toward sustainability and protecting our environment.

How to Know

Selecting a high-performance mat is relatively easy. Mats that are rented usually are not high-performance mats and have relatively short life spans.

On the other hand, mats that are purchased are more likely to be long lasting, more environmentally responsible, and less expensive in the long run.

A simple way to determine if a mat is long lasting is to simply read the warranty. If the warranty is short term, 90 to 180 days, the mat will likely last just a few months at your building's entry—but years in your local landfill.

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