



**Arrow**  
COUNTY SUPPLIES



# Eliminating Washroom Odours

An Arrow County  
How to Guide

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More often than not, the cleanliness of a facility can be perceived solely on the washroom. Upon entering, the first characteristic patrons tend to notice is the presence of any unpleasant odours and this can result in judgment about the cleanliness and professionalism about not only the washroom, but the company as a whole.

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### **About the author**

Bruce Blackledge – Managing Director

Bruce oversees Arrow's strategy, provides direction and coordination to the teams within the business and drive the company's growth plans.

Over the years he has built up a wide-ranging knowledge of the business, Arrow's customers and suppliers which helps him to ensure that Arrow continue to improve their performance and put the customer at the centre of everything they do.

## Introduction

Foul odours are viewed as unpleasant anywhere you encounter them but washroom odours are particularly pungent and unwelcome. In addition, washrooms have a massive impact on the perceived cleanliness of any facility or building and are the main area of complaint for building service contractors.

Visitors will make subconscious links from their impression of the bathroom to the cleanliness of the rest of the premises including the kitchen, reception areas, office space etc. particularly in the hospitality sector. Keeping washroom odours under control is an essential part of any building management and failure to do this can have financial implications such as loss of business or poor feedback ratings.

Masking odours alone should not be considered as an effective solution and the use of scented cleaners can cause a clash of different smells and often make the problem worse. Basic or daily cleaning which tackles the source of odours is vital, therefore understanding what causes these odours is a key part to keeping them under control.

Here is our how to guide to eliminating washroom odours.



**“86% of customers admitted they would not return to a premise if the washroom was not up to par in the cleanliness and hygiene stakes.”**

**“UK workers spend 41 hours per year in the washroom, with men spending an extra four hours more than women using the bathroom facilities over the course of the year.”**

## 1. Identify the source

- ▶ Urine is a main cause of odour in washrooms as bacteria feeds off the urine salts, emitting odours which gets worse as the bacteria grows. When a toilet is flushed a mist is emitted which contains urine particles and bacteria hits the walls and ceiling as well as other surrounding objects so a thorough cleaning regimen is required, not just focussing on the floors but also hard to reach areas where urine particles may have settled.
- ▶ Areas with high humidity tend to have a bigger problem with odours as the warmer the temperature the more moisture is in the air which creates an ideal atmosphere for the odour causing bacteria to thrive.

- ▶ Offensive odours in the washroom are not just a result of what has been deposited in the toilet bowl. Floor drains can also emit very foul smelling odours due to the methane in sewer gas being released into the air when drains dry out.
- ▶ Due to the high levels of moisture that is present in washrooms, it is no surprise that mould can thrive if surfaces are left damp for prolonged periods of time and therefore, result in musty odours. Mildew is not only unpleasant to one's smell but it can be harmful to people's health as well as . Mould and mildew are known to cause respiratory problems, common allergic reaction symptoms, nervous-system disorders and depression.



## 2. Find the best solution

- ▶ Urine changes from an acid to alkaline which attracts more moisture and like limescale, provides a food source for bacteria. Enzyme-based cleaners have been found to be the most effective at destroying bacteria and removing odours long term as they eat the food source as well as the bacteria itself. Staff should clean the inside of urinals and commodes at least once a day.
- ▶ Sewer gases are caused by a loss of the water barrier where traps have gone dry. Ensure these are kept damp by pouring water down the drains.
- ▶ Ensure workers mop floors with a disinfectant that contains deodorisers. They should also use an enzyme cleaner that attacks tough odours.
- ▶ It is best to tackle mould and mildew as soon as they appear - don't leave them to fester as it will make the job much harder. Simply remove the affected area by wiping down with bleach and warm water. Ensure the area is thoroughly dried with a clean cloth to prevent further growth.



**“Some 32% of office workers said their business has been negatively affected by the standard of their washrooms, with staff morale and customer perceptions mentioned in responses.”**

**“Cleanliness is critical when it comes to protecting your reputation. It impacts your customers’ experience and perceptions, affects their loyalty, and influences what they tell friends and family.”**

### 3. Maintenance is key

- ▶ Having the right cleaning chemicals is only part of the solution. Ensuring that cleaning staff are using them properly is often overlooked and with increasing time pressures put on those staff members, vital contact time often falls victim. It is important that the directions on cleaning chemicals and disinfectants are followed to get the best results. Otherwise the odour causing bacteria will not be effectively removed and the problem will persist. Counter tops, light switches, washroom dispensers, door handles and toilets should be given particular attention.
- ▶ Deodorisers can be implemented in a number of ways. Mopping the floor with a deodoriser can often be enough to keep the odours at bay as part of a regular cleaning routine, along with topping up the enzymes to keep the bacteria from returning. Alternatively deodorising sprays or blocks placed in toilets can also be used to a similar effect.
- ▶ Good ventilation is imperative in preventing washroom odours. Simple air flow can assist in reducing unpleasant smells. Keep windows open if possible, or make use of overhead fans and ventilators. This will not only keep the air flow moving but also help remove moist air that can often result in mould and mildew.



## Conclusion

The cleanliness of your facility's washroom can greatly affect the overall perceived hygiene and thus, reputation of your business. By minimising odours, this is the first step towards ensuring your washroom is thoroughly cleaned and maintained and presents a pleasant experience for employees and patrons alike.





Request our **FREE** workplace assessment to help you improve your cleaning plans

**REQUEST OUR FREE ASSESSMENT**

