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# Handwashing Survey Research Drives Industry Solutions





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# Handwashing Survey Research Drives Industry Solutions

Americans desire clean, well-maintained spaces with touchless fixtures and modern aesthetics in public bathrooms. As frequently visited places in public spaces, the cleanliness, hygiene and appearance of restrooms are key.

**“Our annual survey has consistently shown that people have always placed importance on clean restrooms, but now there’s elevated and ongoing demand for increased hygiene and the use of touchless fixtures,”** said Jon Dommissie, vice president of business development and strategy at Bradley Company. **“Similar to how the iPod changed music and 9/11 changed air travel, COVID has forever changed public bathroom expectations and design.”**

Taking Americans’ pulse with an annual, comprehensive [Healthy Handwashing Survey](#)™ for the past 15 years, [Bradley](#) is privy to the market trends defining consumer habits, desires and pet peeves when it comes to public washrooms.

This e-book analyzes survey data gathered from more than 1,000 U.S. adults each year, reviews recent case studies, and identifies pain points and solutions related to restroom cleanliness, touchless fixtures, maintenance, privacy, and cohesiveness.





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# Neat and Clean

Cleanliness is at the top of the list of consumer preferences for public restrooms.

Since the pandemic, public handwashing habits have improved, with 89% of survey respondents reporting that they soap up most of the time after using the facilities. Further, 43% of Americans believe hygiene in public bathrooms has gotten better over the past 15 years.

On the other hand, an alarming two-thirds of survey respondents have had an unpleasant restroom experience. Their top complaints are clogged or unflushed toilets, an old, dirty, unkempt appearance, and unpleasant smells. In particular, 62% cited used paper towels left on the floor or around the sink, 46% identified splashed water on countertops and floors, and 41% observed careless/reckless behavior leading to damage.

**“For many Americans, restrooms carry a certain ‘ick factor’ that impacts how they view — and use — these public facilities,”** said Dommissie.

Unfortunately, if patrons have negative experiences in the powder room, it’s likely to reflect poorly on the company or organization. According to the 2024 survey, the majority (58%) believe a poorly maintained restroom shows poor management. Another 56% report a diminished opinion of the company while 50% vow not to return or will think twice about doing so.

Americans feel so strongly about the condition of these facilities that 60% would opt to pay more money at a business with clean, well-maintained restrooms.



**“Customers place a high value on clean restrooms — and reward businesses that offer them. It’s incumbent upon facility managers to prioritize regular restroom cleaning and make sure that everything is in good working order,”** advised Dommissie.

The feedback is loud and clear, and the pain points are real. Consumers want cleaner restrooms.

With the added benefit of streamlined maintenance, easy-to-clean surfaces like solid surface and natural quartz are a big advantage. With both materials, their non-porous, seamless surface prevents the growth of mold, mildew and bacteria, thereby supporting higher indoor air quality levels. The materials are scratch, stain and heat resistant, and in the absence of any seams, there is much less opportunity for dirt and grime to build up.



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# Choosing Touchless

Consumers' strong feelings about cleanliness in public restrooms are accompanied by a desire to avoid contact with fixtures. In fact, 86% think it's important that restrooms provide touchless fixtures, a preference that has remained quite high ever since the pandemic.

**"Touchless fixtures minimize cross-contamination of germs in restrooms, improve restrooms' cleanliness and hygiene, and make people feel more comfortable using these spaces,"** added Dommissie. **"Further, 70% are more likely to return to a business offering no-touch capabilities in its restrooms."**

Whereas older touchless technology might contain sensors that are not very reliable in delivering soap and water, causing frustration in operating, today's technology is much more accurate. This ensures a more reliable and seamless handwashing experience and better cleanliness with much fewer soap splotches left in and around the basin.

A hygienic, touch-free solution can be found in all-in-one fixtures, which include soap, water and dryer functions in one spot. All handwashing functions are conveniently located and easily accessible while also reducing clutter. Tapping into advanced infrared sensing technology, a smooth and continuous handwashing experience is delivered.





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# Minimized Maintenance

As previously noted, an establishment's reputation can take a beating if its restrooms are not properly maintained. In addition to impacting public perception, poorly designed bathrooms tend to waste water, soap and paper products, thereby chipping away at a company's bottom line.

An even bigger challenge is managing the time, resources and energy to regularly clean, restock and maintain bathrooms on a daily basis. The issue is exacerbated when the maintenance department is short-staffed and tight on budget.

**"Restroom maintenance may seem like a business no-brainer, but limited budgets and facility staffing issues mean that companies are doing more with less staff and resources,"** said Dommissie.

Consequently, products designed to minimize maintenance are great solutions. Some systems incorporate maintenance indicators with IoT connectivity and A/C power, eliminating the need to replace batteries. The indicators provide advanced notice to facility staff when something needs to be refilled, restocked or repaired.

Another innovation is multi-feed soap systems, which supply multiple soap dispensers with foam or liquid soap through a single top fill hub. This significantly reduces time spent on refilling dispensers and is particularly cost-effective for highly trafficked locations with multiple handwashing stations.



Soap and paper towel dispensers have also been upgraded with maintenance-enhancing technology. Easy-to-read refill indicators predict maintenance and ensure dispensers are well-stocked. A magnetic locking system, which is hidden from sight, also simplifies servicing. Anti-slam operation prevents an open dispenser from banging and damaging walls during refills. An easy-feed towel feature avoids jams and torn paper and eliminates frustration for staff and users alike.

Designers can also select touchless all-in-one handwashing systems designed to keep water inside the basin, eliminating water splashing and dripping on floors, walls or users.



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# Aesthetic and Cohesive

While architects and building owners are busy checking the boxes for cleanliness, touchless technology, and low maintenance, a stylish and cohesive look is important as well. Unmatched fixtures and accessories create a cluttered, uncoordinated aesthetic, which can reflect poorly upon the establishment.

To solve this issue, designers are looking for comprehensive collections of washroom accessories to select from. Expanded selections of models, colors and finishes further accentuate and customize commercial washroom designs, giving designers more creative freedom.

These cohesive collections typically offer grab bars, paper dispensers, receptacles, shelves, soap dispensers, and even LED mirrors to seamlessly integrate with any commercial washroom setting for a unified, harmonized look.





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# Prioritizing Privacy

Yet another strong market preference is privacy. Seventy percent of Americans feel public restroom stalls lack sufficient “coverage.” 58% would like to see the gaps around stall doors and walls eliminated, and 96% say occupancy indicators would be helpful. Furthermore, 40% say they would choose the stall furthest from the entrance, and 35% are annoyed when someone selects the stall next to theirs, even though others are available.

Fortunately, a number of durable, well-designed products are available to meet these privacy preferences. Available in different materials — including phenolic, enameled tempered glass, recycled plastic and stainless steel — additional features include securely latched doors and occupancy indicators. Other design strategies include the incorporation of privacy screens within the bathroom space and well-placed mirrors.

Extra tall partitions, as high as 72 inches, present a clean, modern design in different styles and a variety of colors. More importantly, the partitions have no gaps, thereby delivering high levels of privacy. These types of systems are designed with frameless construction, presenting a streamlined look with no visible hardware.

There are also options for gap-free designs between the doors and pilasters, which can be floor-mounted, overhead-braced, or floor-to-ceiling, and are available in a wide range of materials and colors.





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## FIFTEEN YEARS OF PUBLIC HAND HYGIENE ADVOCACY

Starting back in 2009, at the outbreak of the H1N1 swine flu virus, Bradley conducted its first [Healthy Handwashing Survey™](#). At the time, only 45% of Americans opted to increase their hand hygiene in response to seasonal virus increases.

Bradley decided to continue its annual survey of more than 1,000 adults to better understand handwashing habits, concerns about seasonal viruses and the state of public restrooms. Over time, this valuable data has helped shape the company's R&D efforts to create hygienic, stylistic, low-maintenance and easy-to-use solutions for the commercial restroom industry.

"Our goal with this research during the past 15 years has been to better understand handwashing behavior and identify restroom pain points to help facilities better serve the public," stated Jon Dommissie, vice president of business development and strategy for Bradley.

The latest January 2024 survey queried 1,003 American adults about their handwashing habits, concerns about seasonal viruses, and their use of public restrooms. Fortunately, in 2024, the percentage of those who wash more thoroughly during seasonal virus outbreaks has risen to 74% — up from 45% in 2009.

**For more information on the survey, visit [www.bradleycorp.com/handwashing](http://www.bradleycorp.com/handwashing).**

## ATLANTIC CITY BOARDWALK BATHROOM FACELIFT

Responding to public complaints about poor restroom conditions, Atlantic City's Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA) decided to upgrade the Atlantic City Boardwalk's seven high-use bathrooms located along the 4.5 miles of the Boardwalk.

With a goal of making all 14 bathrooms cleaner, durable, family-friendly and more modern, SOSH Architects selected the all-in-one [WashBar®](#) from Bradley Company with touch-free soap, water and hand dryer in one stylish bar.

"I've specified Bradley's products for years and had been curious about the all-in-one concept of the WashBar," said Arley Sochocky, interior design studio manager, SOSH Architects. "After I experienced the unit in person, I knew the WashBar would be perfect for this application. Not only is it highly durable and easy to use, it's completely touch-free, modern, streamlined and super functional."

"The touchless fixtures reduce maintenance requirements for the Boardwalk bathrooms," added Thomas Burns, ambassador manager at CRDA. "This means better sanitary conditions due to the lack of physically touching things used in a public area and no wear and tear on external components and fixtures."

The WashBar's selection of colors, styles and finishes also made it easier for the architects to integrate with the restroom aesthetic and Boardwalk design.

"The tonality of these integral handwashing systems complements the bathrooms' tile floors and walls, which have neutral hues with warm accents. All of these aesthetics tie back to the Boardwalk while keeping the materials and color palette of the restroom facilities consistent across all restrooms," reported Sochocky.





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### SAN JOSE SCHOOL DISTRICT EMBRACES WASHBAR AND VERGE BASIN

Looking for a futuristic, high-end aesthetic with easy-to-use, low-maintenance fixtures for the restrooms, LPA Design Studios selected Bradley's [WashBar®](#) with [Verge® washbasin](#) for the K-12 Agnews Campus at Santa Clara Unified School District in San Jose, California.

To verify that Bradley's offerings would fit the bill, the Verge/WashBar combo was installed in the district office to test its functionality and durability.

"The unit performed well, encouraging the district to move forward with utilizing the sinks and WashBar on all three campuses," reported LPA Design Coordinator Kathryn Gray.

Installed in all 136 campus restrooms, a total of 147 WashBars were specified with single-, double- and triple-station Verge washbasins. The touch-free soap, water and hand dryer are in one single chrome-plated component, and the washbasins are made from non-porous [Evero® Natural Quartz](#).

"While the WashBar has a sleek look perfect for our high-tech campus, it also has a hardy and durable design. Its large one-gallon soap dispenser cuts down on frequent refills, and its hand dryer minimizes paper towel use," said Rosiella Defensor, LEED AP BD+C, senior project manager for the Santa Clara Unified School.

The WashBar and hand dryer are designed to prevent water from dripping onto the user, walls or floor. This protects users from slipping and falling and reduces maintenance.

### PRODUCT SOLUTIONS FOR INDUSTRY PAIN POINTS

Responding to data on industry preferences for touch-free, low-maintenance restroom fixtures with cohesive aesthetics, [Bradley Company](#) offers a number of popular options.

Easy-to-clean options include [Terreon® Solid Surface](#) and [Evero® Natural Quartz](#), which are both cast-formed as one single piece, presenting a non-porous, seamless, hygienic surface. With no crevices or grout lines, this prevents mold, mildew and bacteria from developing and can easily be cleaned, disinfected and repaired.

Supporting low maintenance, [Bradley's top-fill multi-feed soap system](#) supplies up to six soap dispensers with foam or liquid soap. A smart sense system with an LED light indicator displays low soap, making refills much more time efficient.

Presenting the cohesive, stylish look is Bradley's [Elvari™ Washroom Accessories Collection](#). The minimalist, Euro-style pill-shape design features smooth curves and soft edges with a broad selection of fixtures, including grab bars, paper dispensers, receptacles, shelves, soap dispensers and LED mirrors. The 650-piece collection's cohesive design in 12 product families enables seamless integration with any commercial washroom setting.

For enhanced privacy, Bradley's [Euro Style Partitions](#) offer a clean, modern design in three different styles and a variety of colors. The partitions have no gaps, thereby delivering high levels of privacy. And [Bradmar No-Site Partitions](#) feature a gap-free design between the doors and pilasters.





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## Bradley Drives Commercial Restroom Innovation

For more than 100 years, Bradley has created the most complete and advanced commercial washrooms in building markets worldwide. Now part of the Watts Water Technologies family, Bradley is the industry's leading source for multi-function handwashing and drying fixtures, accessories, partitions, solid plastic lockers, and much more. Bradley's collection of lavatory systems adds versatility, seamless style and long-lasting functionality to restroom designs while touch-free handwashing models bring hygiene, advanced technology and efficiency.

### Bradley

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1-800-BRADLEY

### Resources:

Elvari Washroom Accessories

[bradleycorp.com/elvari-washroom-accessories](http://bradleycorp.com/elvari-washroom-accessories)

WashBar

[bradleycorp.com/washbar](http://bradleycorp.com/washbar)

Euro Style Partitions

[bradleycorp.com/euro-style-partitions](http://bradleycorp.com/euro-style-partitions)

Evero Quartz Surface

[bradleycorp.com/evero-natural-quartz-surface](http://bradleycorp.com/evero-natural-quartz-surface)

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[bradleycorp.com/handwashing](http://bradleycorp.com/handwashing)



## elvari

Beautiful Alone. Brilliant Together.

The new Elvari™ collection is the most comprehensive line of washroom accessories from grab bars to dispensers to LED mirrors and shelves with a unified modern look that will elevate any commercial washroom design. **Discover the beauty of unity, only from Bradley.**

Available in Satin Stainless and 5 popular finishes.



[bradleycorp.com/elvari](http://bradleycorp.com/elvari)



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