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Stephco Cleaning uses a range of products to clean and defeat COVID-19

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Boston, MA Michael Collins, vice president of Stephco Cleaning & Restoration, whose father Stephen Collins founded the company 42 years ago, said, “This is historic and unprecedented microbial warfare and we need to use a range of weapons to defeat the COVID-19 virus. My team and I thought we had seen it all and that we knew how to tackle every possible threat, but this is an especially tough enemy with unique characteristics. A sneeze releases about 30,000 droplets that travel 200 miles per hour, quickly contaminating people and contents throughout the room. And you can become infected by touching a contaminated surface, then touching your face. Particles can hang in the air and remain on surfaces for a surprisingly long time. It’s a stealthy, dangerous and deadly enemy.”

Collins has hundreds of long-time clients across eastern Massachusetts, including health care facilities, banks, offices and high-traffic areas like ATM lobbies. He notes that while you’re more likely to catch the virus from an infected person rather than from contaminated surfaces, he and his staff tell clients that researchers think the virus can be viable on a range of surfaces for several days or more. “Our products and procedures follow CDC and EPA guidelines,” he said.

To gain the upper hand and beat the virus, Stephco uses a combination of long-proven sanitizing methods in conjunction with innovative systems and products that must be effective, economical and safe. Among these is an electrostatic sprayer that charges the sanitizing chemical. Once released, the spray clings to surfaces with a positive charge. Doctors’ offices or restaurants can clean and spray furniture, let it sit with minimum ‘dwell time,’ then safely seat the next patrons or patients.

Several leading-edge products kill COVID-19 and other threats on hard surfaces and hot spots at low cost. Stephco uses these products to disinfect its own equipment and vehicles To eliminate particulates and microbials, Collins’ crew runs HEPA-filtered negative air machines and air scrubbers to filter out particles that become airborne during cleaning sessions. These machines draw air in from the surrounding environment and pass it through a series of filters to remove contaminants.

Stephco has earned a reputation for being proactive, partnering with customers to ensure health and safety. Among more unique assignments the firm has undertaken since the virus arrived in early 2020:

- For Encompass Health, Stephco has been proactive to limit and contain outbreaks - Abington

Bank and Envision Bank – Added disinfecting services, focusing on client and personnel areas - Sanitizing on behalf of social service organizations such as Boston Health Care for the Homeless, Father Bill's, South Shore Mental Health, to name a few.

- Holbrook (Mass.) Police Dept. – Donated cleaning/disinfecting services for police vehicles and Dispatch Center. - On Election Day in Abington and Holbrook, provided at no charge HEPA-filtered air scrubbers to help keep airborne particulates at bay as residents voted. - George Washington Toma and other retailers, chose Stephco to protect employees and customers, as well as food distributor Spence & Co.

Surprisingly, Stephco also receives emergency calls. A long-time client informed Collins that one of their employees had returned from an overseas trip and came back to work, later realizing she was infected with COVID-19. Collins' team was called in to fully disinfect the entire premises in time for the next business day.

Collins points to one indication of how pervasive the virus is: Research shows pathogens can hide in the textured surface of paper, including currency, for days, so people should wash their hands after handling currency and avoid touching their face. Even better: Pay with plastic, or use contactless payments.

One important – possibly life-saving -- service the company offers is sanitizing homes to which residents are returning after being discharged from the hospital. Michael Collins agrees with experts who say the cleaning industry should be included under the umbrella of the healthcare industry since cleaning plays such a vital role in keeping people healthy and productive. "We're proud of our record of providing the highest level of commitment," he smiles.

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