



2011

## **How does the use of mats contribute to a safer, healthier environment?**

A common problem for all facilities year round is keeping debris, soils, moisture, and contaminants outside...and not tracked into a facility. Not only can this negatively impact the appearance and health of the facility, but outdoor soils and contaminants brought inside can also mar indoor air quality significantly.

The most efficient way to keep these contaminants out is through the installation of high-performance matting systems.

This is why a facility seeking LEED certification is now required to have mats placed at all building entries and LEED-NC (New Construction) even specifies that the mats be a minimum of six feet long.

We suggest more than twice this length of matting—15 feet—to help ensure that as much as 80 percent of all soil on shoe bottoms is captured and trapped before it contaminates the facility.

Fifteen feet of high-performance matting is typically broken up into three sections:

- Scraper mats, which as its name implies scrapes large debris off of shoe bottoms
- Wiper/scrapper matting, which removes more soil and moisture from shoes
- Wiper mats, referred to as the final line of defense, which remove remaining contaminants and moisture.

## **How to select mats?**

The best way to select mats is to seek out high-performing matting systems. What this means is that the mat is designed to perform and last for several years and the warranty will reflect this longevity. Ask to see the warranty that comes with the mat. Typically, the longer the warranty, the better the mat's construction and quality are. In most cases, these mats should be purchased from a janitorial distributor and not rented from a rental service.

A rental mat is often inexpensively constructed and designed to last only about three or four months. They are not as effective at keeping contaminants outside and, something else to consider, they usually must be disposed of in landfills, adding to our trash disposal problems.

When selecting a proper matting system, keep in mind that you want the mats to accomplish four things: **Stop, Contain, Store, and Provide**. In other words:

- You want the mats to *Stop* soil and water at the building entry
- *Contain* the soil and moisture until it is removed through proper cleaning
- *Store* soil and moisture below the surface of the mat, typically through the use of a dual-level matting system so that soil and moisture do not reattach to shoe bottoms
- *Provide* a safe surface that helps prevent a slip and fall accident.

### **Maintenance/Keys to Success**

The key to success when it comes to matting is first selecting the right mats, which as we discussed are high-performing mats. Once installed, proper maintenance is very important.

Mats should be vacuumed regularly, preferably with an upright vacuum cleaner. In some cases, for a busy location, this may mean two, three, or more times per day. An upright vacuum cleaner will have a brush that agitates the mat's fibers, helping to release soils stored in the matting system.

Eventually, mats do need to be thoroughly cleaned. Carpet extraction is the most effective way to deep-clean mats. How often they should be cleaned depends on the amount of foot traffic in the facility. However, carpet extraction removes deeply embedded soils, moisture, and contaminants, which keep the matting at a top notch, high-performing level.

### **Who should be involved in the decision making process when selecting mats?**

Typically, three people or a group is involved in the decision. The first person to involve is the facility manager(s). Their job is to ensure a high-performing matting system is selected. As we have discussed, this is the most effective mat, helping to

keep soils outside and protect the indoor environment; but, because of their longer lifespan, it is also typically the most cost effective in the long-run.

The custodial crew is also a key partner in the mat selection process. When it comes to soil loading and maintaining the facility, cleaning crews will likely know the facility better than anyone.

Finally, the jansan distributor is key. This person will know what types of matting systems are available, what types of mats should be placed where, and can guide managers and custodial workers to the most effective systems available for their needs.

### **What trends do you see in the college and university market?**

Traditionally, many schools and universities install matting for safety reasons, especially during inclement weather conditions.

However, because more and more educational facilities are going Green and seeking LEED certification, these facilities are now selecting mats because they understand the value of matting systems and the role they play in helping to keep a facility Green, clean, and healthy. Because of this, we anticipate more schools will be selecting high-performing mats.

And, because schools and universities are also looking for ways to become more sustainable, we believe they will be selecting matting systems that are Green and sustainable. In just the past couple of years, new “eco” matting systems have been developed that are made from post-consumer materials, such as recycled plastic. This provides a second life for these materials, helping to preserve natural resources and minimize the amount of tires, plastics, and other materials that end up in landfills.

Christopher Tricozzi is vice president of sales and marketing for Crown Mats and Matting, one of the oldest and largest matting companies in the United States.

### **About Crown Mats and Matting**

For more than 60 years, Crown Mats and Matting has been a pioneer in the development and manufacture of matting products. Beginning with the invention of walk-off matting by the company's founder, R.P. Johnson, the company now has the most diverse matting product line offered in our industry. Crown sells matting through

an extensive network of highly trained sales representatives throughout the United States and worldwide. These sales experts are familiar with the features and benefits of all matting systems and are able to help their clients find the right system for virtually any application.

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