

# WORKLOADING IN ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

## Why it is so Important to Your Success

**W**orkloading is not just an overused industry term. It serves a real purpose and, when implemented correctly, it has a profound positive impact on everyone including the client, front-line staff, middle management, financial overseers, and organization as a whole. Of course, the opposite also is true. If environmental services workloading is not

ever, efficient and equitable workloading is key not only to managing your budget (and we all know we are expected to do more with less these days), but in providing clean and safe work environments within the proposed level of service. Remember, 85 percent of the environmental services operations budget is labor and the rest is equipment and supplies, so having that 85

percent working productively 100 percent of the time is a must. Anything less than that is likely to result in detrimental outcomes.

### The Impact of Improper Workloading

So what are these detrimental outcomes and what impact will improper workloading have on an organization relying on a clean and safe environment? Well, let's take a look at some examples. Imagine your organization is an acute health care facility. We will take a look of the impact of poor workloading from the bottom to the top, so to speak. If frontline staff are expected to do more with less and the tasks they are expected to perform, when performed correctly, add up to more hours than they are scheduled to work, that means something in their job routine has to give. We know how this usually goes: either corners will be cut or work will not be performed. In addition, if work is not distributed equitably, and this often is the case, morale of the cleaning staff is affected. So how do you think an overworked employee with poor morale will perform their daily tasks? Now imagine cleaning tasks not being performed to their fullest extent or with the attention they deserve. We all know what

can happen next: contaminated surfaces, cross-contamination and, yes, the spread of infectious diseases from patient to patient, across an entire wing or ward of a hospital and, in some cases, across several wings. Now we have the frontline staff impacted as well as the clients/customers who entrust their lives to the organization.

This cost of an outbreak in any institution is extremely high monetarily and in terms of public opinion and reputation as well. The impact makes its way all the way to the top or the CEO. If fatalities are involved in this scenario, the impact is far greater and will entail investigations, possibly lawsuits and, of course, the immeasurable gravity of the impact for those who lost loved ones.

## Getting It Right

So back to the workloading itself. Now that we understand why it is so important, we need to know how to ensure we get it right. There are three parts to this:

1. How do we ensure productivity?
2. How do we ensure efficiency?
3. How do we ensure equitable workloads amongst staff?

There are several tools on the market today (some more comprehensive than others) to assist environmental services operations managers in workloading efficiently and accurately. These software tools have industry time standards for hundreds of environmental services tasks using hundreds of different pieces of equipment built into the software so there is an accurate way to measure the amount of work performed. Associating these tasks with a job routine or employee allows the