



Safety

How Georgia-Pacific Helps the Food Industry Curb Contamination Risk

James Langford | Dec 21, 2023

For food and beverage makers grappling with high inflation while trying to grow their bottom lines, every expense matters.

Proper workplace sanitation and hygiene is one that's significant to begin with—and can easily grow when it's not handled correctly or fails to comply with government safety regulations.

Fortunately, that's a responsibility with which Georgia-Pacific Professional, a division of Georgia-Pacific, can help. The business, whose products include hygiene equipment and supplies, specializes in state-of-the-art tools including the Water Resistant enMotion® Towel Dispenser, built to protect the paper towels inside from moisture during high-pressure wash-down procedures.

With a touch-free design that dispenses just one towel at a time, the enMotion dispenser also helps reduce the risk of cross-contamination during food processing and hand-washing, the company says. It's the only device of its kind certified by *HAACP International*.

That certification, given to nonfood products, materials and services, shows an item meets 10 strict criteria for reducing contamination risk within the food-processing industry.

Improving Food Safety

"COVID put a spotlight on food processors and their adherence to U.S. Department of Agriculture and Food and Drug Administration risk-mitigation policies, and that, in turn, exposed a void in the industry's access to food-safe paper towel dispensers," Julie Howard, vice president and general manager of GP PRO's towel, skin care and air care categories, says in a statement.

"I'm incredibly proud of our team for designing and bringing to market a differentiated solution that not only helps these essential businesses elevate food safety and hygiene but also operational efficiency and waste reduction," she adds.

Such developments have significant implications in the lucrative U.S. food-processing market, which comprises about 37,000 food and beverage plants employing 1.6 million workers, according to government data.

Proprietary research shows the enMotion® dispenser helps reduce waste by 30 percent compared with standard folded towels, GP PRO says. Roughly 85 percent of customers say it has lowered the frequency with which paper towel replacements are required in restrooms.

With a workforce of 30,000, the company is a leading producer of tableware, paper-based packaging, building products and related chemicals.

Reducing towel waste is particularly important for food processors since single-use paper towels—as opposed to fabric varieties—are widely recommended for businesses subject to FDA rules that include frequent hand-washing to prevent tainting food products with disease-carrying bacteria that can cause illness.

The U.S. government estimates that 48 million cases of food poisoning occur in the country every year, sickening 1 in 6 people. Those illnesses lead to 128,000 hospitalizations and as many as 3,000 deaths, **according to the FDA.**

The cost to the U.S. economy is correspondingly high: as much as **\$15.6 billion** a year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which investigates foodborne disease outbreaks.

GP PRO's products make a difference in employee health as well as product safety, something that's beneficial to manufacturing facilities of all types, the company notes: "Clean hands are the first line of defense against germs and employee absenteeism."

The U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, in fact, requires employers to provide hand-washing facilities and even ensure that employees use them after some activities, including the removal of personal protective equipment like gloves after work in a hazardous environment.

Even in ordinary settings, the CDC says, employees who keep their hands clean are less likely to get sick themselves and to infect others, whether at work or at home. Specifically, the agency says, **hand-washing helps:**

- Reduce respiratory illnesses like colds by 21 percent
- Reduce the number of people who get sick with diarrhea by 31 percent
- Reduce diarrheal illness in people with weakened immune systems by 58 percent

When workers are drying their hands after washing, products like GP PRO's high-capacity automated towel dispensers reduce contamination risk because there's no need for "hundreds of people to touch them throughout the day," explains Alex Lucas Judd, a spokeswoman.

Other company products that help customers improve workplace sanitation and hygiene include:

- Brawny® Professional Disposable Wet Hand Cleaning Towels, which are pre-moistened with a nonabrasive formula that can remove heavy soiling. They're packaged in a portable pail.
- Compact Quad® Plus Toilet Paper Dispenser: The dispenser features a patented roll lock mechanism that helps lower stub roll waste; its Compact® Coreless Toilet Paper refills enable nearly 100 percent paper usage when combined with the roll lock mechanism, GP PRO says. Sliding doors improve hygiene by protecting rolls that aren't in use; the doors don't slide until

existing rolls are used up. Company research shows 90 percent of customers say it has reduced the frequency of toilet paper refills and 60 percent say it has curbed clogging of toilets.

- enMotion® Automated Touchless Soap and Sanitizer Dispenser: Like the enMotion® towel dispenser, it's sealed to reduce the risk of cross-contamination. It dispenses at least 99 percent of its foam before replacement is required. You can view or purchase the *dispenser* and *refill* on mscdirect.com.
- GP Industrial Hand Cleaner System: The cleaner contains dermatologist-tested grit soap that breaks up heavy soils. Its portion-controlled touchless dispensing helps curb cross-contamination and minimize waste. You can view or purchase the *dispenser* and *refill* on mscdirect.com.

What tools does your business rely on to prevent contamination of food products? Tell us in the comments below.

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