

True or false? The myths to dispel about detergency at the time of COVID-19



During these times, disinformation is a consequence of a frantic race to publish news about the new virus. A phenomenon, that of fake news, which becomes viral to the detriment of correct information: we could precisely say "another virus", citing a recent book that analyzes precisely the different profiles of communication that took place until the closure of the phase¹.

Trends and beliefs have also emerged in the professional cleaning sector which start from the wrong assumptions and which generate confusion in the perception of public opinion.

An example? Those who think they are in a clean and sanitized room may not know that, instead, only a sanitization procedure has been performed with an ozonator.

The Allegrini team has reviewed three myths to dispel and warns about detergency fake news: only reliable and authoritative sources as well as experts and professionals in the sector can provide the right answers to questions on the topic of cleaning and hygiene in professional fields.

#1 ROADS DECONTAMINATION

The first, the most popular in the mass media, perhaps the most iconic and representative of detergency in recent months. Also complicit in the images transmitted by Wuhan, where you can see deserted streets and workers dressed in protective suits, this is certainly the most discussed myth. In an interview given to *Sanità Informazione* magazine, Prof. Privitera, ordinary professor of *Hygiene at the University of Pisa*, states that road sanitation is only useful to reassure the population and that there is no scientific evidence that defines it as an instrument of prevention of the spread of Coronavirus.

The risk of contagion is linked to surfaces that potentially come into contact with the hands, which in turn can touch the eyes and nose, surfaces on which viral particles have settled and which have not been subject to environmental agents that can cause their decay: the road surface is not among these².

THE BEST NEWS ABOUT PROFESSIONAL CLEANING

#2 HYGIENE OF PREMISES ON REOPENING

The greatest reassurance born from a false belief. Why sanitize rooms closed for two months or that have not seen any access? There is a precise indication by the Italian Ministry of Health that explains the illogical nature of sanitizing an environment such as a hotel, shop or restaurant closed for more than 10 days (and here the number of closing days is discriminatory): in fact, if the activity has not been occupied for at least 7-10 days, only normal ordinary cleaning is necessary for reopening, since the virus that causes COVID-19 has not proven able to survive on surfaces longer of this time.

Rather than a preventive sanitation before reopening, it is a good idea to plan a periodic environmental hygiene plan during customer access that includes the cleaning and hygiene measures recommended and ensures constant decontamination over time.



#3 THE SOLUTION IS (NOT) THE ACTIVE INGREDIENT

Let's clarify.

The active ingredients indicated by the Italian Ministry of Health (70% ethanol and 0.1% sodium hypochlorite) are not the only ones to be admitted: it is also possible to use hydrogen peroxide and other active ingredients not expressly indicated related to the prevention of COVID-19, provided they are effective according to the EN 14476 standard.

Banishment for DIY or self-produced mixtures because the active ingredient is not the only component of a formulation: surfactants and co-formulants make a product complete and effective.

Professional detergents are specially formulated to deal with more complex types of dirt and contamination than domestic ones and have a technical and safety data sheet that clearly indicate dilutions, contact times, fields and correct methods of use.

Sanitizer or disinfectant? A diplomatic issue

The COVID-19 emergency has turned the previous situation upside down in many areas, taking on global proportions, including at a linguistic level, so much so that preserving the correct information even when translated into the different languages has become even more difficult and challenging. Sector technicalities, difficulty of literal translations and promptness in the use of the suitable terminology: an example, already known to those working in the sector, is represented by the translation of the Italian term "disinfettante" (in reference to a disinfectant product registered in Italy as a Medical Device Surgical from the Ministry of Health) that in English, general language for communication worldwide, it is possible to make only with "detergent with hygienizing effect", to the detriment of the properties that the product is able to boast.

Delicate themes that travel on the razor's edge especially when we talk about detergency and communication or detergency and translation.

In support of the efforts to inform the world in real time, or almost, some glossaries available online, such as "Glossary on the COVID-19 pandemic", the Linguistic Portal of Canada with dozens of terms in English and French from various fields including medicine, sociology and politics, and the glossary of the Institute of Applied Linguistics of Eurac Research in Bolzano with terms in Italian, German and Ladin and references also to the terminology of Community law and the legal systems of Austria, Germany, Switzerland.

Together with the fake news, the multilingual translation, faithful to the original meaning of the terms at the time of COVID-19, is the new challenge to face: it is a question of State!



1 For more information, see the book: "L'altro virus. Comunicazione e disinformazione al tempo del Covid-19" by Massimo Scaglioni and Marianna Sala, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 2020.

2 Source: "Pulizia e sanificazione degli ambienti, tra certezze e falsi miti ecco come sta andando la fase 2 (e come prepararci alla fase 3)", in <https://www.sanitainformazione.it/salute/pulizia-e-sanificazione-degli-environments-between-certainties-and-false-myths-here-as-is-going-the-phase-2-and-as-prepare-to-3-phase/>.

The culture of cleanliness is under construction. Let's build it together.