

Wet Technologies' Slurry Blaster Helps RIT Curb the Spread of COVID-19

Cleaning hundreds of campus door pulls

HOLBROOK, NEW YORK, USA, September 10, 2020 / EINPresswire.com/ -- Soon after the coronavirus outbreak last spring, Rochester Institute of Technology researchers supporting the response to the COVID-19 outbreak in New York state learned of a fascinating property of copper and its alloys. "They act to kill bacteria and viruses on surfaces," said Gerry Hurley, a technical program manager in the Center for Integrated Manufacturing Studies (CIMS) and the Golisano Institute for Sustainability (GIS). "The research demonstrated that pure copper was shown to kill the SARS-CoV-2—which causes COVID-19—in four hours."



Copper Door Handles Before and After



Applying the antiviral findings to the RIT campus

Moving quickly to apply the study's key learnings to inhibit the spread of the novel coronavirus across RIT's sprawling main campus, the team reached out to Dave Harris, director of Training, Utilities and Environmental Management in Facilities Management Services (FMS) "to figure out how we could help get the campus and all its buildings ready to reopen safely," Hurley said. "We needed to identify the most efficient methods to leverage copper's germ-fighting properties on high-touch surfaces such as door handles and pulls," he added.

Handles get slurry blast from Wet Technologies

Under tight deadlines, the team evaluated 360 door handles from more than 40 campus buildings to determine their metallic makeup. According to Hurley, surface copper on the old door handles measured as low as 79 percent before cleaning; after cleaning, the surface copper



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Gerry Hurley

increased markedly to 89 percent. “The higher the copper content, the more effective the surface is at killing germs on the handles,” he said, “with 89 percent or more copper being the most effective.”

When the copper content was verified, the team cleaned the handles using a specialized slurry blast machine from Wet Technologies Inc., whose president and founder is RIT alumnus Frederick Greis. This low-pressure, high volume, high concentration, closed loop [wet blast system](#) restores surfaces to ‘like new’ condition. “RIT has really run with the

technology and the work has demonstrated that it can inhibit the life of the COVID-19 virus,” Greis said. “Those handles see a lot of human contact as students move between classes, the library and other buildings.”

Fred Greis

Wet Technologies, Inc.

[email us here](#)

+1 631-285-7285

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