

Dirty Restrooms Are Costing Transportation Hubs Billions in Food and Beverage Revenue

Nearly three out of four summer travelers will leave a restroom without using it if they find a restroom unacceptable

DOYLESTOWN, PA, UNITED STATES, June 29, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- DOYLESTOWN, PA, June 29, 2026 – Consumers ready to hit the road for the summer’s busiest travel week are warning those who operate airports, [highway rest stops](#) and train stations: Make sure the restrooms are clean, or we will spend our money elsewhere.

AAA projects a record number of Americans – 72 million – will travel at least 50 miles from their home during Fourth of July week. According to the 2026 [Invisible Sun Summer Travel Index™](#), these travelers will speak with their pocketbooks depending on the state of the restrooms they encounter:

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The message from summer travelers is clear: Make sure the restrooms are clean, or we will take our money elsewhere.”

John Kunzier, CEO Invisible Sun Technology

- Nearly three out of four summer travelers (72%) will leave a restroom without using it if they find a restroom unacceptable. In terms of what makes a restroom unacceptable, consumers ranked “a dirty toilet area” as number one, followed by “dirty floors” and “foul odors.”
- Nearly eight out of 10 (79%) consumers avoid eating in restaurants in airports, highway rest stops or train stations with dirty restrooms. The financial impact of such decisions on transportation hubs is significant. For example, food and beverage concessions account for 26

percent of non-aeronautical revenue – a market valued at \$65 billion – for U.S. airports, according to the 2025 Industry Research Market Research Report.

Prior research indicates a clear correlation between consumer views on restrooms and the extent to which they will spend their money in the same facility. According to the 2026 Healthy Handwashing Survey by Bradley Company, six out of 10 consumers say they would spend more at a business known for clean restrooms, with 71% more likely to return and spend more after a positive restroom experience.



Invisible Sun 2026 Summer Travel Survey

"The good news is Americans are traveling this week and this summer despite their economic worries," said John Kunzier, CEO of [Invisible Sun Technology](#), a leading provider of contactless Proof of Presence solutions for facility operations. "The bad news is if the restrooms they encounter are unacceptable, they will take their money elsewhere."

Most will travel in cars – and many will enter highway rest stops with trepidation

The challenge of capturing consumer spend is especially relevant for organizations that operate highway rest stops. More than half (53%) of those surveyed say they are planning to drive to their summer destination. Yet the survey shows that restrooms in highway rest stops are the least acceptable to summer travelers – they are more than three times (3.2x) as likely to view restrooms in highway rest stops as unacceptable versus those in airports, and nearly three times as likely (2.7x) to view restrooms in highway rest stops as unacceptable versus those in train stations.

In terms of which highway rest stop restrooms are considered the cleanest, consumers ranked those along the Florida Turnpike as number one, followed by I-95 and the Garden State Parkway. Yet those same travelers also ranked the Florida Turnpike as having the dirtiest restrooms, followed by the Garden State Parkway and the New Jersey Turnpike.

"This contradiction reveals an important insight: Travelers don't lose confidence because a restroom is always dirty – they lose confidence because they never know what they'll encounter. When restroom cleanliness is inconsistent, customers are less willing to stop, dine or shop because they can't trust the experience," said Kunzier. "The problem isn't the location – it's inconsistent cleaning. Every time a traveler walks into an unacceptable restroom, operators risk losing not just that purchase, but future visits as well. Consistent restroom standards protect customer confidence, and customer confidence drives revenue."

Consumers were also clear about their "favorite convenience store restrooms," listing Buc-ees as number one and 7-11 as number two. Quick Trip and Wawa tied at number three.

"It is encouraging to see restrooms are deemed to be more acceptable in some locations," Kunzier said. "Restroom operators must maintain vigilance across all of their properties. If a clean restroom is followed by a dirty one, the consumer will be put off. And their money will follow them out the door."

2026 Invisible Sun Summer Restroom Survey: The 2026 Invisible Sun Summer Travel Index surveyed 788 U.S. consumers in May and June 2026. Results are statistically significant with a ±5% margin of error at a 95% confidence level.

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