

The Truth About Dishwasher-Safe Keyboards

Why Use of Dishwasher-Safe Keyboards is an Exercise in Futility

Ask healthcare workers how often dishwasher-safe keyboards get pulled from service to be disinfected, and the answer, more often than not, is an emphatic NEVER. And it's easy to see why.

Not only is removal of keyboards at hundreds of individual workstations a daunting task, but it's also a costly endeavor that wastes hospital resources and precious man hours. More important, dishwasher-safe keyboards are, in reality, a detriment to good infection control practices. Why? Because most keyboards are never removed from service to be washed.

“The submersible keyboards in my department have never, to my knowledge, been put through a dishwasher”

Nurse Caroline, Kissimmee, FL
2016 KSI nationwide survey of infection preventionists

While presenting an ostensibly viable solution for fighting harmful germs that collect on a keyboard's surface, the argument can be made that dishwasher-safe keyboards do an actual disservice to patient care. Submersible keyboards may foster a false sense of security in end users who, consciously or subconsciously, assume their individual efforts to disinfect are unnecessary – that the function of cleaning is presumably done for them, the responsibility of others, carried out by a machine somewhere off in a distant, faraway department.



The use of submersible keyboards de-emphasizes the need for ongoing, vigilant human intervention in fighting the bacteria that are deposited onto a keyboard's surface 24 hours a day, after each and every use.

Superbugs don't wait to wreak their havoc until a convenient time has arrived to schedule keyboard submersion into soapy water. Whether a keyboard is submerged monthly or daily, the outcome is the same – abundant missed opportunities for real time disinfection in a world now plagued by ever-virulent strains of bacteria that cause 100,000 U.S. deaths each year.

Dishwasher-safe keyboards can only be categorized as a failed prospect – little more than a feel-good approach to fighting germs, and a hindrance to the responsible management of infection.

So, what's the real solution for meeting the infection control needs of healthcare providers?

When it comes to dealing with patient lives, quasi-clean just isn't good enough. That's why KSI created the 1801-SX LinkSmart® Keyboard with San-a-Key® – a total cleaning system and the only product offering a complete and comprehensive solution toward the elimination of HAI-causing germs on a minute-by-minute basis without need to disrupt workflow.

What makes our product remarkable? First, unlike most submersible keyboards that allow dirt to become lodged between and beneath raised keys, the smooth, crevice-free surface of LinkSmart® keyboards prohibits infiltration of particles. Zero penetration means that much less to disinfect.

Further, a healthcare worker needs only to depress our patented, bright red button located on the face of the KSI keyboard to initiate a quick and easy cleaning sequence that is accomplished with use of approved germicidal wipes. Keys become locked, and the user is guided visually by an onscreen keyboard schematic. LinkSmart® detects which keys have been depressed through the cleaning process, one onscreen key at a time, until every key is disinfected. The keyboard returns to normal operation as its keys are automatically reengaged.

Finally, San-a-Key® software allows for user-defined, scheduled cleaning at set intervals established by healthcare facility IT personnel. Push notifications sent to end users throughout the day serve as reminders that keyboards are in need of cleaning.

Use of the LinkSmart® Keyboard System on a sustained basis benefits healthcare workers, hospital administrators and, of foremost importance, patient care, by dramatically reducing germs and bacteria transmitted through cross contamination. Real-time San-a-Key® analytics provide for a convenient, centralized data collection point to manage the disinfection of keyboard surfaces throughout a facility on a consistent basis. Administrators are able to pinpoint when, where and by whom a keyboard was cleaned, as well as identify where lack of cleaning has occurred. Infection prevention teams are empowered to focus resources on emerging trends in hospital-acquired infections and multiple-drug resistant organisms that exist on keyboard surfaces.

When it comes to dealing with patient lives, quasi-clean just isn't good enough

While submersible keyboards do indeed come out of a dishwasher squeaky clean, what about the other 364 days of the year?

LinkSmart® with San-a-Key® is a total, all-in-one system for maintaining an infection-free clinical desktop on a continual basis, superior to the performance of dishwasher-safe keyboards in every respect. Our new 1801-SX is the definition of innovative technology that cannot be matched by submersible keyboards.