



By: Jim Peduto

Piecing Together The Measurement Puzzle

Finding a place for measurement technology in your organization's management system.

The practice of adenosine triphosphate (ATP) monitoring is not a new innovation in the cleaning industry, but it seems to be a growing trend, especially among cleaning manufacturers.

With this growth, in-house and contract cleaning organizations may consider adding ATP monitoring to their regular survey and inspection schedules.

But, before doing so, I suggest cleaning managers first consider what ATP monitoring does, what it means and, most importantly, how it fits into an organization's management system.

Adenosine triphosphate is the universal energy molecule present in all animal, plant, bacteria, yeast and mold cells — living or dead.

Residues, particularly food or organic remnants, contain large amounts of ATP.

If left on a surface, residues can harbor and grow bacteria, cause cross-contamination, develop biofilms and compromise quality.

An ATP monitoring system can detect the amount of residue or organic matter that remains after cleaning a surface or object.

The amount of ATP detected and where it is detected indicates the areas and objects that may need to be re-cleaned and the possible need for improvement in cleaning procedures.

Structure Comes First

Rather than relying solely on ATP monitoring to confirm cleaning performance, organizations should instead ask themselves, "Where does technology like ATP testing fit into our management system?"

As technology evolves, ISSA's Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) provides a framework for fitting new innovations like ATP monitors into an organization's management system.

The results of an ATP test are a direct reflection of the quality management system an organization has in place.

Here is a breakdown of the five main principles of the Standard and how ATP monitoring fits:

1. Quality systems

The quality systems component of CIMS focuses on ensuring effective operations.

An effective, quality system includes: Defining cleaning service requirements, implementing a quality plan, measuring performance, obtaining relevant feedback from the customer and committing to continual improvement.

■ ATP monitoring and quality systems

The results of an ATP test helps identify whether or not the cleaning organization is meeting the scope of work and performance expectations.

2. Service delivery

Service delivery includes all customer-related processes such as

purchasing, staffing and handling unexpected events.

■ ATP monitoring and service delivery

ATP test results can help identify the need for staffing or work-loading changes.

3. Human resources

From hiring to training to the actual delivery of service, an organization's human resources — including both management and cleaning personnel — must be prepared to uphold the organization's commitment to quality.

■ ATP monitoring and human resources

If an organization performs an ATP test, the results may show a need for additional employee training to ensure service delivery and commitment to quality.

4. Health, safety and environmental stewardship

This section addresses the processes, systems and documentation an organization needs to have in place to ensure the safety, health and sustainability of a facility.

■ ATP monitoring and health, safety and environmental stewardship

An ATP assessment can identify potential health risks if, for example, organic material is still present in high-touch areas.

It would show that those surfaces are not being cleaned properly to stop the spread of infection.

5. Management commitment

Management commitment demonstrates an organization's pledge to management systems that meet customer needs and expectations.

■ ATP monitoring and management commitment

If an organization is lacking management commitment, all the other areas of the management system are not going to be as successful as they could be.

A Tool For Standardization

With a quality management system in place, an ATP monitor can help validate the effectiveness of the system.

Some organizations might think that an ATP monitor is the answer to the question, "Is it clean?"

But, I like to think of it as the answer to, "Do we have a quality management system in place, and is it being followed?" *CM*

Jim Peduto is the president of Matrix Integrated Facility Management LLC and the co-founder of the American Institute for Cleaning Sciences (AICS). AICS is the registrar for ISSA's Cleaning Industry Management Standard (CIMS) certification program. Visit www.ISSA.com/CIMS for more information.