

Mop performance can depend on strand material and the style of cut.

By Anne Dantz

The custodial mop is most commonly used for washing floors, applying floor finish and wiping up dust on floors. Finish mops are used to apply floor finish, dust mops are to dust otherwise clean floors and wet mops to wash dirty floors.

Mop material can be cotton, rayon, nylon, polyester, polypropylene or a hybridblend. Traditionally, 100 percent cotton mops were thought to be the best mops for washing floors due to their absorbency. The more soiled water a custodial worker can pick up, the cleaner the floor will become.

However, 100 percent cotton mops can leave behind lint. Cotton/rayon, cotton/polyester or other synthetic-blend mops tend to leave behind less lint than 100 percent cotton. Linting becomes a real concern when your crew applies floor finish. Any mop lint left behind becomes stuck and dried into clear finish layers.

Looped or Cut?

To solve this problem, mop manufacturers designed certain mop styles with looped instead of cut strand ends. Looped-end yarn consists of one continuous strand sewn into the mop head at the beginning and end of each strand. Cut ends are not exposed to fray or shed lint with frequent use. Also, looped ends tend to avoid getting caught on furniture. The use of a mop to apply finish is actually contrary to the original use of a mop -- to absorb fluids. A finish mop is required to hold a certain amount of floor finish and then release the chemical onto the floor in a controlled, gradual manner. Mop manufacturers say that synthetic mop materials can be twisted tighter into yarn strands than all-cotton mop material. This tighter twist to the strands allows better holding and release of the floor finish.

Wet and finish mops come in loose or banded styles. A banded style mop has a thin, rectangular piece of material sewn across the bottom of the mop, holding it flat in a fan-like pattern. Some like this style because they believe they can clean larger floor areas with it. However, others don't like this style when applying floor finish. They say that the band at the end drags against the floor and creates lines in the dried finish layers.

Some mop styles come in colors other than white to help cleaning workers identify finish mops from wet mops.

Mops come in launderable and disposable styles. Disposable mops are ideal for mopping toxic or hazardous substances, to be discarded after use. However, some managers also find them to be cost effective in ordinary cleaning when the expense of laundering mops outweighs the expense of disposal.

Cleaning managers are more apt to use disposable-style dust mops than for any other mop use. For example, one dust-mop style uses disposable synthetic-fiber cloths attached to a dust mop frame, to be used and thrown away when dirty.

Whether disposable or launderable, most dust mops are meant to be chemically treated before being applied to floors, to help pick up dust and dirt. Some dust mops come pretreated, but repeated launderings may reduce the effectiveness of this pretreatment

Mop Costs

Prices for wet and finish mops depend on size (weight), features and number being purchased. A cut-end, cotton/synthetic, unbanded mop runs about \$4 for a 16-ounce mop head to \$7 for a 32-ounce. A looped, unbanded, cotton/synthetic mop head can run \$3.50 for a small size (12 to 16 ounces) to \$4.50 for a large (28 to

32 ounces).

If you're looking for a looped, banded style mop, you'll pay about \$6 for a 12-ounce to \$12 for a 32-ounce. Pre-laundered, banded mop heads run about a dollar over prices for the looped, banded style. Mop washing nets can run \$9 to \$10 depending on size.

Dust mop prices range also by size, and cut-end versus looped-end does make a difference. A 5 by 18 inch (small) cut-end dust mop head runs about \$9, while a 5 by 48 inch (large) is about \$20. Small to large looped-end dust mop head are about \$10 to \$21

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