

# The Dirty Reasons Why Diners Don't Return to Restaurants

## SCA Nationwide Consumer Survey Shows Bathroom Cleanliness Can Make or Break the Dining Experience

**PHILADELPHIA, PA (October 28, 2008)** - If you've ever had a perfect evening of fabulous food, fine wine and impeccable service spoiled by a trip to the restroom, you're certainly not alone. The results of a newly released survey commissioned by SCA Tissue North America, one of the three largest producers of Away-From-Home tissue products, found that the cleanliness of restaurant bathrooms is a key factor in repeat business.

According to the survey, Eighty-eight percent of those who visit restaurants believe that restroom cleanliness reflects the overall hygiene standards throughout the restaurant, including kitchen and food prep areas. The survey, conducted online by Harris Interactive among a sample of 2,175 U.S. adults, found that of the 97 percent who visit restaurants, 86 percent think restaurant hygiene is very important to their dining experience.

"Forty-two percent of the people polled reported using toilet paper or paper towels to avoid touching things inside an unclean restroom," said Ian West, Washroom Director, SCA Tissue North America. "If people feel they need to take these measures to protect themselves from unsanitary conditions in the restroom, it clearly has a spillover effect to their overall impression of the dining establishment."

According to the poll, the top 10 dirty restroom factors that would prevent restaurant customers from returning are:

- Overflowing toilets: 58 percent
- Unpleasant odors: 57 percent
- Slippery/dirty floors with buildup, gum or other residue: 49 percent
- Dirty partitions, doors, doorknobs, walls or fixtures: 38 percent
- Dirty and wet sinks and countertops: 38 percent
- Insufficient toilet paper: 33 percent
- Overflowing trash cans: 31 percent
- Insufficient liquid soap: 28 percent
- Non-working toilet paper dispenser: 22 percent
- Management/employees unavailable for reporting problems: 19 percent

The survey also found that nearly one-third of those surveyed (29 percent) would never return to a restaurant with an extremely unclean or unsanitary restroom. The survey also reports that negative restroom experiences trigger strong negative "word of mouth":

- 50% of those who visit restaurants said they would tell their friends and family about a negative experience with an unclean or unsanitary restaurant restroom.
- 46% said they would avoid going to a restaurant because of a bad experience with a restaurant's restroom that they had themselves or one they heard about from others.

"We weren't surprised by the results from this study," added West. "That's why we always work closely with our restaurant customers to create a first-class experience that rivals other restaurant establishments."

## **About the Harris Poll**

Some key demographics of the Harris Poll include:

- Females: 52 percent; Males: 48 percent;
- Participants who are married: 52 percent
- Participants with children living in household: 30 percent
- Participants who are Baby Boomers (age 45 and above): 52 percent

The survey was conducted online within the United States by Harris Interactive via its QuickQuerySM online omnibus service on behalf of SCA between August 1-5, 2008 among 2,175 U.S. adults ages 18 and older, of whom 2,108 visit restaurants. More information on the survey methodology and results is available upon request.

## **About SCA**

SCA Tissue is the third largest manufacturer of Away From Home tissue products in North America. With annual sales of \$1 billion, its products include disposable napkins, towels, wipers, bath tissue and related dispensing systems for the food service, industrial, commercial and health care markets under the global Tork® brand of its parent company, SCA. More information is available at [www.torkusa.com](http://www.torkusa.com) <<http://www.torkusa.com/>> .

SCA is a \$17 billion (U.S.) global consumer goods and paper company that is headquartered in Stockholm, Sweden. SCA has more than 50,000 employees doing business in 90 countries. More information is available at [www.sca.com](http://www.sca.com).