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Stuttgart > So high is the consumption of paper towels annually



Municipal institutions in Stuttgart

This is the annual consumption of paper towels

Andrea Jenewein , 17.03.2019 - 16:48

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Leaf by leaf: Every year in public institutions in Stuttgart, 16 900 kilograms of paper towels are used up. Photo: Lichtgut / Achim Zwegarth

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What is the most ecological way to dry your hands? And is this also hygienic? The city of Stuttgart has hitherto resorted to paper towels in public institutions.

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Stuttgart - The number is impressive: 16 900 kilometers of paper towel per year are consumed annually in the urban facilities in Stuttgart. In offices, schools and museums, 25.6 million paper towels are drawn from the dispensers each year and 44 100 paper towel rolls are rolled out paper by paper. If you place the cloths one behind the other, the paper ribbon reaches from Stuttgart to Sydney.

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Bothered to calculate this mileage, has become the technology company Dyson . Why, this is obvious: The British company, whose German headquarters are in Cologne, wants to market its electric hand dryers - especially since there will be a new tender by the city of Stuttgart in 2020 for the framework contract for the supply of hygiene and cleaning agents. And so it is not surprising that in the text with a raised index finger is warned that "paper towels produce much more waste than disposable coffee cups" and they "usually not recycled" would.

It's not just about environmental protection , it's also about hygiene

That does not sound good - and should actually be better in a green city. At least

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paper towel industry and Dyson wage a religious war - the market is very large.

Even the studies that have appeared to be the most environmentally friendly or hygienic way to dry hands are hard to believe: they were usually commissioned either by the European Tissue Symposium, the professional association of pulp producers, or by Dyson.

Studies were commissioned by Dyson or the Association of Pulp Producers

Mention should be made of two examples: In 2011, scientists from the University of Bradford published a test with the nozzle dryer Airblade, which generates an air flow at a speed of more than 600 kilometers per hour. The result: "The Airblade was superior to the warm air dryers in reducing the transfer of bacteria." What the researchers also found, but mentioned only marginally: paper towels were superior to all types of dryers. This study was funded by airblade manufacturer Dyson. In 2016, a study showed that the turbo dryer produced more than 1300 times as many virus deposits in the room as paper towels. Here, funds from the European Tissue Symposium flowed.

The city of Stuttgart refers to this thin evidence in its decision to use recycled paper towels: "If there is still no clear evidence of the advantages of one or the other system, we leave it with the paper towels," said Jana Steinbeck, spokeswoman the city of Stuttgart. In addition, the staff would perceive the towels as more hygienic, "which is a subjective feeling, but not insignificant".

The Federal Environmental Agency rates the jet stream best from an ecological point of view

However, the ecological aspect has not yet been considered. A study by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) has shown that Airblade is the most environmentally friendly option. Thus, paper towels and warm air dryers produce at least 70 percent more carbon dioxide emissions than compressed air dryers. The principal of the study: Dyson.

However, the Federal Environment Agency (UBA) also considered hand drying systems in 2014 as ecological. The result: Jetstream has the advantage in most of the assessed load categories, with the lowest impact in the greenhouse gas potential impact category, for example. The Federal Environmental Agency recommends, however, not to use the blower dryer in hygienically sensitive areas such as hospitals. Due to the high sound pressure level, especially children in close proximity could be exposed to a medium hearing risk.

Ecology versus hygiene

So in Stuttgart hygiene and health weigh more than ecology? The General and Personnel Office makes the following statement: "In the invitation to tender quite alternative drying methods such as the fan dryer are queried. At the same time, hygiene and hazards should not be neglected. "The consideration was holistic: it should be taken into account that there are existing and functioning paper towel holders everywhere. "These should be disposed of completely and installed new brackets for the blower dryer. This is neither economical nor sustainable. "

The Office concludes that it "can meet all needs, if different systems can be used or if the exchange of mounting systems is due anyway". It would also be good if science finally clarifies the question. With a very dry study.



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