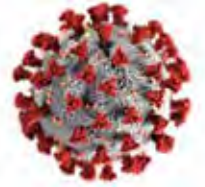


COVID'S Effects on the Towel Industry



By Valerie Sweeney

It's been more than a year since COVID came into our lives. The good news is that spring is upon us, so we can start to enjoy the outside again. Hopefully, the nightmare will be over in the near future, but it still continues to wreak havoc in many different areas. One major area that continues to be a thorn in the side of many industries is the import market.

As you know, terry towels and microfiber towels for the carwash industry are imported from overseas. These towels are manufactured in places such as China, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. Typical turn-around from the time an order is sent overseas to the time it comes into port is roughly 90 days. We are now seeing lead times as long as six months. This longer lead time has been very tricky for buyers, and inventory planning.

Why are the lead times so long? There are a few different factors in place. Just like the United States, sometimes factories overseas experience outbreaks of COVID, and need to operate with less personnel resulting in reduced produc-

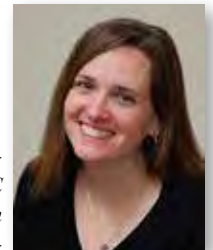
China is exporting more to the U.S. than the U.S. is exporting back to China, so China doesn't have as many containers as they need to keep up with the demand. This has driven up the cost of overseas freight considerably, while also delaying the shipment of containers. We have found that once the containers land in the U.S., they are not cleared by customs as quickly as they were in the past. What used to take a few days, can now take several weeks.

Most likely all of your towel vendors are stocked up, and have adjusted to the change in lead times to service the industry. Just know that if your typical color becomes out of stock, now might be a good time to be a little flexible. Like everything else we are dealing with during these crazy times, there are some things like overseas lead times that are beyond our control. **NC**

“Another major factor affecting the lead times for product is the overall global shortage of shipping containers.”

tion. They also experience the same challenges we do — balancing work with taking care of children who are not in school full time. Having fewer employees available can really slow down turn-around times.

Another major factor affecting the lead times for product is the overall global shortage of shipping containers. There are containers out there, but they are not in the places that need them. There is a worldwide demand for many products, so it has definitely created some logistical issues.



Valerie Sweeney is a towel consultant with ERC Wiping Products. You can reach her at 800/225-9473 or erc@ercwipe.com

Valerie Sweeney

MY CAR WASH GUY
20+ years of industry experience
Car Wash Equipment Sales and Support
P.O. Box 5161
Mooresville, NC 28117
www.mycarwashguy.com
Jim Soucek
Toll Free: 888 • 977 • WASH (9274)
Fax: 888 • 976 • WASH (9274)
Cell: 704 • 247 • 0625
E-mail: jim@mycarwashguy.com



Don't Miss the 2021 NRCC with Keynote Speaker Former NJ Governor Chris Christie!

nrccshow.com

