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UMC making, selling handwashing stations

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When mechanical engineering and construction company UMC started adding handwashing stations it had devised to its construction sites to ward off COVID-19 it got lots of interest from other contractors and firms that manage jobsites.

So the Mukilteo-based company juiced the stations up a bit, made them portable, designed a prototype and is now selling them. In the five hours they had been on the market Thursday, UMC got 60 replies to an email it sent to general contractors, developers, building owners and operators, government entities and vendors, inquiring about the product, said Steve Brooks, a UMC vice president.

“People are asking how much do they cost, what’s the lead time,” he said.

As of Thursday afternoon it had sold 25, all to general contractors.

The stations are metal frame. One model has two stainless steel sinks, and two each of water faucets, paper towel dispensers and soap dispensers, all touch-free, for \$4,000. The other model has four sinks and four of all the other items, and costs \$6,200.

The prices include two to three day delivery to the Seattle area. The shipping cost varies for outside that area.

UMC said its two-sink version maintains safe, 6-foot social distancing for two people at a time with a capacity of up to 120 washes per hour, and double the people and washes for its four-sink version.

That is, by the way, long enough to sing Happy Birthday twice, as health officials recommend, “or the Alphabet Song once,” said Brooks.

Station options are a hot water heater (\$600), collection sump (\$500) and back-flow preventer (\$400).

Station installation requires a 1-1/2 inch waste line and a 3/4 inch cold water line. It also requires a dedicated 15 amp circuit for 120-volt power for the hot water option. Installation is free if those connections can be made easily, but costs if they cannot.

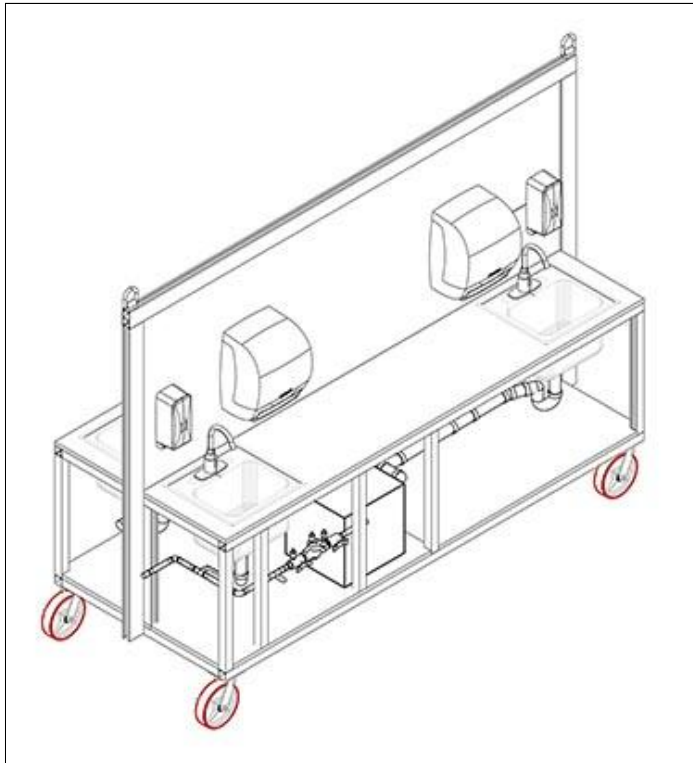


Illustration provided by UMC [\[enlarge\]](#)

This four-sink wash station from UMC has touch-free water faucets and paper towel and soap dispensers.

The company has been talking to officials at a medical facility and some larger grocery chains and warehouse clubs about them potentially buying the wash stations, Brooks said. If handwashing becomes more frequent in our society and UMC makes its design a bit more architecturally pleasing, he said he sees a market at companies such as Boeing, and at medical facilities, schools and stadiums.

The durable stations are great for construction sites, he said, where they can be moved about — or craned in at high-rise projects.

“We quickly realized jobsites, at least the ones we deal with, don't have frequent locations where you can wash your hands or just clean up,” he said.

This is not the first gizmo UMC has created. It has a catalog of products it uses in-house, and sells modular plumbing assemblies to Sustainable Living Innovations. That Seattle-based multi-housing building technology company is buying them for its new apartment buildings, Brooks said.

He said handwashing “certainly has become an extremely high priority for us,” and he hopes the public doesn't falter in its newfound zeal to do what mothers have been touting for ages — wash your hands.

“I like to think it's going to stick,” he said.

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