



**NILFISK AUTONOMOUS SCRUBBER DRYER MAKES THE GRADE:**

How the Nilfisk Liberty SC50 supports custodial staff at St. Michael-Albertville High School





St. Michael-Albertville High School in Minnesota, USA, (STMA) lives up to its motto, **“Excellence is our tradition.”** Student achievement levels are high, and the district consistently makes the AP District Honor Roll. STMA is also known for its students’ athletic performance, including multiple state wrestling championships, its theatre program, and its robotics team.

All of these activities require state-of-the-art facilities, and STMA is currently the second-largest high school building in Minnesota. In addition to the academic areas, the STMA campus includes the state’s largest high school Performing Arts Center and an impressive Activity Center, which features six basketball courts, baseball and softball cages, a fitness center, and a fieldhouse with an indoor running/walking track. Combined, the STMA facilities cover 425,000 square feet (39,484 m<sup>2</sup>), every one of which must be cleaned on a regular basis by the school’s 12 custodial staff members.

A little over a year ago, STMA became the first high school in the country to welcome the Nilfisk Liberty SC50, an autonomous scrubber dryer, onto its cleaning crew. Now, Rick Pool, the third shift supervisor responsible for cleaning roughly 100,000 square feet (9,290 m<sup>2</sup>) every night, can’t imagine what he’d do without it. “It’s a huge time-saver,” Pool says, “especially for our busy school that has a lot going on every day.”

## THE CHALLENGE:

---

## Completing all cleaning tasks on a tight schedule

STMA serves more than 2,000 students. Once you add in the staff and members of the community who attend events and use the Activity Center, several thousand people walk through the school every day. Especially in the winter (when the area gets an average of 42” (1.07 m) of snow), dirt and grime can build up quickly if the floors aren’t cleaned daily.

Achieving daily cleaning has been challenging, Pool says. Not only is the space immense, but the size of their custodial team was smaller than it had been in the past, which meant everyone else had to take on more duties. Pool’s cleaning responsibilities include scrubbing the floors in the gym, fieldhouse, fitness center, and several hallways, as well as performing a number of other tasks like cleaning bathrooms. Since the Activity Center is open Monday through Friday from 5:00 am to 10:00 pm during the school year, he has limited time to get everything done.

Before Nilfisk Liberty arrived, Pool used a traditional scrubber dryer to clean the floors in his focus areas. While the machine did its job well, the process took a lot of time, making comprehensive daily cleaning impossible. So, Pool adopted a rotating schedule, cleaning the fieldhouse on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and the gym and hallways on Tuesdays and Thursdays. “I wouldn’t have enough time to maintain clean entryways and hallways,” he says. “Often, I wouldn’t be able to clean the entire fieldhouse, so I’d just do the perimeters where people come in.”

*“Often, I wouldn’t be able to clean the entire fieldhouse, so I’d just do the perimeters where people come in.”*

~ Rick Pool,  
St. Michael-Albertville  
High School

## The Nilfisk Liberty SC50 handles repetitive tasks, so staff can accomplish more on a daily basis

The Nilfisk Liberty SC50 was designed to alleviate the exact type of challenge Pool describes. It can perform repetitive tasks with minimal supervision, increasing cleaning productivity and freeing up custodial staff for work that requires a human touch.

The autonomous scrubber dryer features three modes for cleaning in various environments:

- **CopyCat:** The operator programs the cleaning path by performing a single manual ride-through, and then the machine flawlessly replicates the path for subsequent cleanings.
- **Fill-in:** The operator rides once around the perimeter of the site to be cleaned, and then the machine fills in the middle.
- **Manual:** The operator uses the machine like any other scrubber dryer to perform manual and ad hoc cleaning tasks (e.g., picking up spills).

Pool primarily uses Fill-in mode, switching to CopyCat for a few more complex areas.

“Operating the machine is straightforward,” he says. “It’s easy to program a new path or reprogram when you want to change routes. Then it does the work on its own.”

The Nilfisk Liberty SC50 saves Pool several hours every day, which means he no longer has to rotate his cleaning tasks or just do entryways and perimeters. “The Liberty cleans a hallway in about half of the time it used to take me,” Pool says. “With the autonomous scrubber, we’re able to better maintain the floors not only in my area, but across the entire school.”

In addition to boosting productivity, the machine has improved Pool’s job satisfaction. “I’m a nitpicky person,” he adds. “I like to keep things clean. The Liberty saves me a couple of hours every day. It’s easy to program and easy to use.”

Pool also appreciates the support he’s received from Nilfisk, not only while implementing the new technology, but on an ongoing basis. “Nilfisk has been great,” Pool says. “They’ve given me a lot of good advice, provided training, answered all of my questions, and generally made sure that I know everything I need to know to get the most out of the equipment. The Nilfisk team is always helpful and easy to communicate with. I’ve felt supported every step of the way.”

STMA may be unique in its size and facilities, but the challenges it faces are common. Due to a lack of time and a shortage of labor, custodial teams at educational institutions across the country are struggling to achieve their desired cleaning results on a regular basis. That’s why more schools are implementing advanced technologies like autonomous cleaning solutions. Visit [Nilfisk online](#) to learn more about incorporating the Liberty SC50 into your cleaning program.

*“The Liberty saves me a couple of hours every day. It’s easy to program and easy to use.”*

~ Rick Pool,  
St. Michael-Albertville  
High School

