

# Why Enviro-Conscious Cleaning?

By incorporating green cleaning into your business, you help protect the health of people without harming the environment. This does not mean you sacrifice appearance or effectiveness; you simply engage in processes and techniques that are less abrasive on the environment and by doing so, it typically presents the same or better results.

## **Health and Cost Containment**

Building related illness affect many American workers since people spend as much as 90% of their time indoors. Improve indoor environmental quality by using products that have a reduced impact on the environment and incorporate green cleaning practices. This can also help improve productivity and save companies money. Applying these practices may limit the number of respiratory, asthma and allergy issues that may surface which typically result in sick days, doctor visits and low productivity.

## **Compliance**

Many state, local and federal governments as well as non-government (i.e. schools) organizations now require the purchase and use of products that have a reduced impact on the environment.

## **Customer Perception**

The public increasingly views environmentally responsible organizations as preferable to those that have not taken such a stance.

## **Corporate Citizenship**

Enviro-conscious cleaning advances companies' sustainable business strategies, improving both their business models and their role in the communities they serve.

# How to Get Started With Going Green

As consumers take a greater interest in their personal health and the environment they live in, the demand for businesses to adopt green practices continues to increase. Finding relevant information and practical solutions can seem challenging. Among the various sources, information may be misleading. Here are some common misconceptions about starting your own green program:

**Myth: Going green is only about switching cleaners used to clean the workspaces in your business.**

**Fact:** Going green is more than just switching away from traditional cleaning chemicals. A green program should include changes that address multiple aspects of your business. Recycling bins can be placed throughout your business to reduce wasted printer paper. Toilet tissue, hand towels and even food containers with recycled content should be considered. Products made with recycled content require less water, energy and virgin wood pulp. Going green is about procuring green products and implementing more efficient procedures that reduce the impact on human health and the environment. To implement a green program, here are a few simple steps to get started:

- 1. Commit a Team:** Gather the key decision-makers and associates to implement the green program. Discuss the importance of going green and make sure everyone agrees on moving forward with the program.
- 2. Set a Baseline and Create a Plan:** Understand the current conditions of the facility and how products are used throughout the business. Create a plan that strives to improve on inefficient or environmentally unhealthy practices.
- 3. Review Products:** Having the appropriate cleaners and equipment will help make the transition to a green program much smoother. Find and evaluate your chemicals, paper, cleaning equipment, liners, mats and building supplies. Understand the cost and benefits associated with replacing traditional products with environmentally-preferred products.
- 4. Train Associates and the Green Team:** Be sensitive to any concerns that result in the implementation of a green program. Incorporate a green program in phases over several sessions and reinforce the benefits of the program.
- 5. Communicate:** Inform everyone on the successes that result from a green program. Meet regularly to review expectations and roles in maintaining the program. Allow for feedback from all associates, customers and cleaning professionals to continually improve the initial plans developed.

**Myth: To go green takes too long, requires too many changes and is not worth the investment.**

**Fact:** Start with small changes to drive motivation for larger changes. Some of these changes could include placing mats at high traffic entryways to decrease the resources needed to clean soil and dirt from carpeting. Replace cotton mops or paper towels with microfiber cloths to significantly reduce the need for chemicals. Even small changes can improve the quality of workspaces and reduce resource costs, such as water or paper. A cleaner work environment can also reduce the number of sick days and the spread of infectious illnesses. Making the commitment to greener practices can give a positive impression towards customers and other businesses.

**Myth: Determining whether a product is suitable for a green program is difficult.**

**Fact:** Various agencies like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Green Seal provide certification programs where products/services must meet certain standards to be considered environmentally preferred. Once a product or service is approved, typically a certificate is issued and a label may be identified on the packaging or product. This is one way to help you find sustainable products. The U.S. EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program principles can also help you manage your green purchasing processes by making sure you are procuring the right products. For your reference, a more comprehensive list of green standards can be found on page 5.

**For additional information about how to incorporate green cleaning, see *Green Cleaning for Dummies* by Stephen Ashkin and David Holly of the Ashkin Group, sponsored by the International Sanitary Supply Association (ISSA).**

# Enviro-Conscious Cleaning Standards

Standard	Description	Audience
<b>The Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI)</b>	BPI promotes the use, and recycling of biodegradable polymeric materials (via composting). The BPI is open to any materials and products that demonstrate that they meet the requirements in ASTM D6400 or D6868, based on testing in an approved laboratory.	Anyone interested in compostable products.
<b>Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI)</b>	The Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) is a nonprofit trade association that applies science to make carpets, rugs and vacuums better and longer lasting. CRI has several signature programs. The Green Label and Green Label Plus testing programs are designed for architects, builders and facility managers who want assurance that carpet and adhesives products meet the most stringent criteria for low chemical emissions. The Seal of Approval testing program helps identify superior cleaning products including spot removers, deep cleaning extractors and vacuums.	Any purchaser of carpet, adhesives and/or vacuum cleaners.
<b>Cedar Grove Composting</b>	Cedar Grove Composting offers a program of technical review and testing for compostable products to determine their feasibility in a commercial composting process. Items submitted for approval range from can liners to foodservice ware items like utensils, plates, bowl, clamshells and wrap. Cedar Grove also transforms grass, leaves, yard trimmings, food waste and wood waste into compost. Cedar Grove has developed a full line of healthy soils and has grown to become the largest single dedicated yard waste composting facility in the United States.	Anyone interested in compostable products.
<b>EcoLogo (Environmental Choice)</b>	EcoLogo is North America's largest environmental standard and certification organization. EcoLogo certifies environmental leaders in over 120 product categories. It is one of two programs in North America that has been successfully audited by Global Ecolabeling Network (GEN) as meeting ISO 14024 standards for eco-labeling.	Anyone interested in purchasing products with a reduced environmental impact.
<b>Greenguard Environmental Institute (GEI)</b>	The Greenguard Environmental Institute (GEI) is an industry-independent, non-profit organization that specializes in acceptable indoor air standards for indoor products, environments, and buildings. All certified products must meet several chemical emission or "offgassing" standards. GEI also establishes acceptable product standards for building materials, interior furnishing, cleaners, electronics and children's products.	Any purchaser of building materials, school materials or cleaning and maintenance products.
<b>Green Seal</b>	Green Seal is an independent, nonprofit organization that issues science-based environmental certification standards. Product evaluations are conducted using a life-cycle approach to ensure that all significant environmental impacts of a product are considered.	Large, institutional purchasers, including government agencies, universities, and the lodging and architectural building industries.
<b>Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)</b>	LEED is an internationally recognized third-party certification program and accepted benchmark for the design, construction and operation of high performance green buildings. LEED strategies are aimed at improving performance across all the metrics that matter most: energy savings, water efficiency, CO2 emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.	Commercial and residential building owners and operators, architects, engineers, interior designers and construction managers.
<b>Scientific Certification System (SCS)</b>	Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) is a global leader in independent certification and verification of environmental, sustainability, stewardship, food quality, food safety and food purity claims. Certified product categories include, but are not limited to, adhesives/sealants, office supplies, packaging & shipping materials and paper products. SCS assessments lead to the recognition of accomplishments in greenhouses has inventories and offsets, agricultural production, food processing & handling, forestry, fisheries, flowers & plants, energy, green building, product manufacturing and corporate social responsibility.	Anyone interested in purchasing products with a reduced environmental impact.
<b>USDA BioPreferred Program</b>	The BioPreferred program was created by the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002 (2002 Farm Bill) and expanded by the Food, Conservation and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill). The purpose is to increase the purchase and use of biobased products. The United States Department of Agriculture manages the program. Some of the products included in this program are cutlery, disposable food containers & tableware, cleaning supplies, floor care, soaps & laundry, medical products and office supplies.	Federal and contractor personnel looking for biobased products.
<b>U.S. EPA Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG)</b>	The EPA is required to designate products that are or can be made with recovered materials, and to recommend practices for buying these products. Once a product is designated, procuring agencies are required to purchase it with the highest recovered material content level practicable. The EPA also issues guidance on buying recycled-content products in Recovered Materials Advisory Notices (RMANs). RMAN levels are updated as marketplace conditions change.	Primarily federal agencies, but helpful to anyone interested in purchasing products with a reduced environmental impact.
<b>U.S. EPA Design for the Environment (DfE)</b>	The DfE logo on a product means that the DfE scientific review team has screened each ingredient for potential human health and environmental effects and that-based on currently available information, EPA predictive models, and expert judgment-the product contains only those ingredients that pose the least concern among chemicals in their class.	Anyone interested in purchasing products with a reduced environmental impact.
<b>U.S. EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP)</b>	The EPA created the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program to help federal officials meet the requirement of purchasing environmentally preferable products. Environmentally preferable means "products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose." This comparison applies to raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, use, reuse, operation, maintenance, and disposal.	Primarily federal agencies, but helpful to anyone interested in purchasing products with a reduced environmental impact.