

Greening Your Institution

Many of the cleaning products we use everyday can be harmful to people, animals, and the environment in the manufacturing process and disposal. Chemicals in cleaning products may cause a wide range of skin, respiratory, immune, allergy, cancer, and reproductive harm. They are especially dangerous around children and custodial staff who use them every day.

As a result, all of NJ's state properties and authorities are now required to purchase and utilize green cleaning products (Executive Order #76, 2006). However, if you want to go green in schools and other public facilities, you must take your own initiative.

Clean Water Action can provide free training and consultations. Follow the steps below and you'll be well on your way to making your community clean and green!

Policy & Training



- Establish a green cleaning policy, e.g. set the highest standards for health & safety by choosing least-toxic products.
- Set up a free training & consultation with Amy Goldsmith at 732-963-9714 or agoldsmith@cleanwater.org.

Education & Involvement

- Educate and train all custodial workers and staff on green cleaning.
- Appoint a health and safety committee to set goals and oversee results.

Implementation

- Identify your current inventory of cleaning products and practices.
- Implement a pilot project in selected area of the building and evaluate results after 2 weeks.
- Buy new or phase in green products.
- If under contract, utilize vendor input.

GREEN CLEANING:

Healthy Tips for Homes, Schools, Communities & Workplaces



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What Is Green Cleaning?

Green cleaning means using least toxic cleaning products that are safer for people, animals, and the environment in homes, schools, communities, and workplaces. Green cleaning practices can provide improved indoor air quality, reduce health risk from exposure, and protect the environment, while maintaining a healthy level of cleanliness and disinfection. Going green means that it must be accessible to all including corner store shoppers. To that end, we promote and advocate solutions that are readily available, affordable (cost neutral or cheaper) and effective. See chart on reverse side for Home SAFE Home cleaning solutions.

What to Look for...



- Non-toxic
- Biodegradable
- Phosphate Free
- Contains no dyes, chlorine, or hypochlorite
- Recycled content containers
- Bulk packaging
- Natural fragrances
- Full disclosure or labeling of "active" and "inert" ingredients

Resources...

- **Clean Water Action & Clean Water Fund** provide free training and consultation. Contact Amy Goldsmith at 732-963-9714 or agoldsmith@cleanwater.org
- **Deirdre Imus Environmental Center for Pediatric Oncology**, www.dienviro.com, 201-336-8071.
- **Center for the New American Dream** lists green products at www.newdream.org/cleanschools/safelist.php.
- **Environmental Choice Program**, www.environmentalchoice.com.
- **New Jersey Green Schools Program**, reduce energy bills and save money at www.globallearningnj.org, 732-528-0016.



Green Cleaning:

Healthy Ways to a Toxic-Free Home, School, Community or Workplace



Cleaning Categories	Current Common Product	Environmental & Health Impacts	Alternatives
Drain Cleaner	Powder & liquid drain cleaners contain lye	Very caustic, burns human tissue & plumbing pipes	Metal snake, plunger or baking soda, salt, with white vinegar
Deodorizer/Air Freshener	Variety of solids, sprays & powder products contain cresol, phenols, formaldehyde	Many health problems including cancer, desensitizes your nose	Baking soda in frig, cat pan, trash can; poupourie; white vinegar for cleaning up animal "accidents" on carpet/furniture
Dish Cleaner at Sink	Variety of liquid "detergent" products	Non-biodegradable, harsh to skin	Soap bar in a dish; liquid "soap" without anti-bacterials
Floor Cleaner & Shining	Variety of liquid & powder products mixed in water, often contains phenols	Can cause cancer, vapors remain in house	Vegetable based oil soap (e.g. Murphy's) in water mixture
Furniture Cleaner & Polish	Variety of liquids, aerosol, pump & squirt bottles; contain phenols	Can cause cancer, vapors remain in house	Oil soap on damp cloth
General Cleaner	Ammonia or chlorine bleach based product	Carcinogen causes respiratory distress; mixed together causes deadly chloramine gas	Oil soap, Bon Ami, a "comet" like cleanser [spot treat with 1% bleach as disinfectant]
Glass Cleaner	Variety of pump liquid sprays with ammonia	Can cause respiratory distress & other ailments	50:50 white vinegar & water; newspaper to wipe
Laundry Cleaner	Variety of liquid & powder products, some with bleach & other boosters, some w/ scents & colors, others not; powders have phosphates	Artificial colors & fragrances can irritate sensitive skin, phosphates are not biodegradable and can cause algae blooms and fish kills	Liquid detergents don't have phosphates; use washing soda or Borax to give a cleaning boost instead of bleach; bleach only selected and necessary items
Oven Cleaner	Variety of aerosol products contain lye	Very caustic, can burn/disfigure, fumes can scar lungs, can blind eyes	Self cleaning oven, tray that can be removed to clean, apply baking soda paste, use steel wool
Protect woolens/seasonal clothing from moths	Mothballs or flakes contain dichlorobenzene or naphthalene	Evaporates in air, respiratory distress and other problems, children may think it's candy—can cause seizure in 1 hour	Cedar and/or lavender in drawers, closets, & sealed containers; put cedar shavings from pet store in old stocking & tie up
Toilet Cleaner	Variety of liquid and powder products often contains hydrochloric acid	Burns skin & eyes, fumes can burn lungs & metal; if swallowed can kill you	Soap, Bon Ami, white vinegar for buildup, 1/2 cup baking soda to freshen up
Anti bacterial soap	Variety of liquid pump bottles often contain fungicides and/or 2 4 D, a common pesticide	American Medical Assoc. does not recommend use; kills bacteria essential to intestinal tract; hinders production of vitamins that protect mouth & skin; inhibits immune system development	Use a liquid or bar non-detergent soap; wash and rub hands after using toilet, changing diapers, soiling hands, handling meat, etc. for 20-30 seconds.
Anti-bacterial sponges & scrubbies	Variety of brands may be clearly marked or in fine print "not for use in aquariums" contain fungicides and/or common pesticide, 2-4 D	Kills bacteria essential to intestinal tract; hinders production of vitamins that protect mouth & skin; inhibits immune system development	Use a non-anti-bacterial sponge; read carefully for very fine print; put in microwave for 30 seconds or dry cycle of dishwasher



Cleaning Tips

- spot clean** rather than a whole area.
- wipe on** preferred over spraying.
- pump spray**, more targeted, fewer fumes, than aerosol.
- always** have supply of baking soda, white vinegar, "oil" soap, washing soda, plain soap, and Bon Ami

Laundry Tips



- **Pre-soak:** Soak heavily soiled items in warm water with 1/2 cup of washing soda for 30 minutes. Rub soiled areas with liquid soap.
- **Stain Remover:** Soak spot in cool water immediately, sponge away as much as possible. Repeat remedy if necessary. Air-dry fabric since heat of dryer can "set" stains permanently.
- **Blood:** Pour hydrogen peroxide directly on bloodstain and rinse in cold water.
- **Chocolate & Coffee:** Soak in cold water, rub with soap and a mild borax solution and rinse. Wash in water as hot as fabric will stand.
- **Fruit & Wine:** Soak in cold water for 30 minutes. Rub soap into remaining stain and wash in water as hot as fabric will stand. Bleach with lemon juice and sunlight if needed.
- **Grass:** Rub with glycerin (available in drug stores), let stand for 1 hour, then wash.
- **Ink:** For a ballpoint pen, sponge with rubbing alcohol, rub with soap, rinse, and wash. For a felt-tip pen, rub with soap, rinse and wash.
- **Lipstick:** Rub with cold cream or shortening to dissolve color, rinse area with solution of washing soda in warm water as necessary to remove grease. Wash in soapy water as hot as fabric will stand.
- **Mildew:** Wash with soap and water. Rinse well, dry in sun. If spot remains, apply lemon juice, rub with salt, and dry in sun. Wash.
- **Perspiration:** Rub with solution of vinegar and lemon juice in water.