



The Sustainable Business Bulletin

Marion County Public Works – Environmental Services EarthWISE Business Program

Why Green Your Cleaning Products?

3rd Party certifications provide guarantees

Cleaning products are necessary for maintaining attractive and healthful conditions in the home and workplace. In addition to the aesthetic benefits of cleaning, the removal of dust, allergens, and infectious agents is crucial to maintaining a healthful indoor environment. But cleaning products can present several health and environmental concerns. They may contain chemicals associated with eye, skin, or respiratory irritation, or other human health issues. Additionally, the concentrated forms of some commercial cleaning products are classified as hazardous, creating potential handling, storage, and disposal issues for users.



The dirty details - environmental and health concerns

The actual risks from cleaning chemicals at typical exposure levels are often uncertain, and in many cases are probably low. Regardless, reducing the hazard of a product is a desirable pollution prevention objective as part of decisions that also take into account other important product attributes.

- *Cleaning products are released to the environment during normal use through evaporation of volatile components. Janitorial staff and others who perform cleaning can be exposed to concentrated cleaning products.*
- *Certain ingredients in cleaning products can present hazard concerns to exposed populations (e.g., skin and eye irritation in workers) or toxicity to aquatic species in waters receiving inadequately treated wastes. For example, alkylphenol ethoxylate, a common surfactant in cleaners, has been shown in laboratory studies to function as an endocrine disrupter that adversely affects reproductive hormones in wildlife exposed to polluted waters.*
- *Ingredients containing phosphorus or nitrogen can contribute to nutrient-loading in water bodies, leading to adverse effects on water quality. These contributions, however, are typically small compared to other point and non-point sources.*
- *Volatile organic compounds (VOC) in cleaning products can affect indoor air quality and also contribute to smog formation in outdoor air.*

So who's at risk?

- *The cleaning industry employs about 2.8 million potentially exposed janitors. In addition to these professional janitorial staff, who can be assumed to use cleaning products daily, many other building occupants perform light cleaning on a routine or occasional basis, e.g. dusting, wiping off desks and counters, etc. All building occupants are potentially exposed to the volatile components of cleaning products.*
- *Data from Washington State show that about 6 percent of janitors experience a job related injury from chemical exposure to cleaning products every year.*

(continued)

Important Dates

- **January 18**
Martin Luther King Day
- **January 6**
M.C. Master Recycler Class Registration Deadline
- **February 15**
Presidents Day
- **March 13**
Mid-Willamette Valley Green Awards
- **March 20**
Vernal Equinox (Spring!)

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Important 3rd-party certifications of note:



Green Seal™ is an independent, non-profit that certifies products and services that meet certain performance and environmental impact qualifications. Green Seal has standards for several categories including industrial & institutional cleaners, industrial & institutional floor care products, and industrial & institutional hand cleaners, just to name a few. www.greenseal.org



EcoLogo™ certification provides assurance that products and services meet stringent environmental standards that have been verified by a third party auditor. EcoLogo™ has many standards for cleaning products including floor care products, hard surface cleaners, hand cleaners, and carpet & upholstery cleaners among many others. www.ecologo.org



The Design for the Environment (DfE) Program is one of EPA's premier partnership programs. DfE works with a broad range of stakeholders to reduce risks to people and the environment by preventing pollution. In the cleaning industry, the program partners with manufacturers to improve the human health and environmental profile of their products. www.epa.gov/dfe



Scientific Certification Systems™ provides independent certification of environmental, sustainability, food quality and food purity claims. Through SCS's Material Content certification programs, manufacturers earn the right to label products with the SCS logo. www.scs-certified.com

Source: www.waxie.com, www.cleanlink.com

Benefits of buying green cleaners

- Choosing less hazardous products that have positive environmental attributes (e.g., biodegradability, low toxicity, low volatile organic compound (VOC) content, reduced packaging, low life cycle energy use) and taking steps to reduce exposure can minimize harmful impacts to custodial workers and building occupants, improve indoor air quality, and reduce water and ambient air pollution while also ensuring the effectiveness of cleaning in removing biological and other contaminants from the building's interior.
- Buying cleaners in concentrates with appropriate handling safeguards, and reusable, reduced, or recyclable packaging, reduces packaging waste and transportation energy.
- Buying less hazardous cleaners may reduce costs when it comes time to properly dispose of any leftover cleaners.

So what are green cleaners and how will I know them?

From what was written above we can assume that green cleaning may be defined as "effective cleaning that protects health without harming the environment." The challenge then becomes to find which cleaner does just that—protects humans and environment. However, the overwhelming number of products and their competing claims makes it almost impossible to know what to buy and who to believe.

Fortunately, there exist third party non-profit and government organizations that have created environmental standards by which a product may be judged. Standards that they have developed for product safety, toxicity, characteristics, and performance ensure that consumers are using a product that is less harmful to human health and the environment. EarthWISE businesses, in fact, are encouraged to purchase as many of their cleaning products that have a 3rd party certification as they can.

For information on how to identify reputable 3rd party organizations read the side bar on the left.

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

- Notice -

2010 GREEN Awards

NOMINATE YOUR FAVORITE ORGANIZATION!



Sponsored by the
Friends of Straub
Environmental
Learning Center,
Marion County Public
Works, and Garten
Services.

CATEGORIES

- **Recycler of the Year – Individual, Educator, Business**
- **Sustainable Organization of the Year – Small Business, Large Business, Non-Profit**
- **Green Building of the Year**

DEADLINE for nominations is **Jan. 31, 2010**. For more information and a nomination application visit: www.fselc.org or call 503-391-4145

2010 Mid-Willamette Valley Green Awards Nominations Sought

The Friends of Straub Environmental Learning Center (FSEL) has just announced that they are accepting nominations for the 2010 Green Awards. The Center, which provides a variety of environmental education programs for children and adults, will announce the winners at a fund raising event held on March 13. The categories are:

- **Recycler of the Year**
- **Sustainable Business of the Year**
- **Certified EarthWISE business of the Year**
- **Green Building of the Year**



A committee of Green Awards sponsors—the FSEL, Marion County Public Works, Garten Services, and Marion Soil and Water Conservation—will choose the winners of the various categories. The winners will be presented with their award at the FSEL Green Awards event that will begin at 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 13, on the Willamette University campus in Putnam University Center. Winners will also receive complimentary tickets to attend.

To learn more about attending the dinner and auction call or email FSEL at 503-391-4145 or fselc@fselc.org. To download a nomination application go to www.fselc.org.

Sustainability Factoids

Southwest Airlines is working on a “green airplane” with recycled carpet, synthetic leather seating and an improved on-board recycling program. The changes would equate to a weight savings of almost 5 lbs. per seat, saving fuel and reducing emissions, according to Southwest.

France is adding sustainability, human happiness, and well being to Gross Domestic Product measurements when evaluating economic health. They concluded that measuring a country’s GDP is an insufficient measure of how well a country is doing.

Based on projections of how many fluorescent lights will be collected in 2009 (as of 10/26), **Marion County** recycling efforts will have resulted in collecting 23.5 miles of lights if placed end-to-end (and that doesn’t include businesses!)

In 2008, **Marion County residents** generated an average of 2,902 lbs. per person of garbage. That’s 141 lbs. more than the average Oregonian. It’s also an increase of 38% (796 lbs./person/year) since 1994 and an increase of 18% (436/person/year) in the past 10 years!

Given the above numbers and based on the US average life expectancy of 78 years, the average person in Marion County will generate the following in their life:

94,235 lbs. (47 tons) of garbage.

132,100 lbs. (66 tons) of recycling to be recycled or composted.

A total of **226,336 lbs.** (113 tons) of waste. This is about the same weight as **19 African Elephants**.

Certified EarthWISE business info regarding Green Awards

Just because you are an EW business/organization does **not** mean that you may only apply for the EW award. You may choose any category you wish. As an EW business, you are already "certifiably" taking steps toward becoming a more sustainable business; thus, any business that applies in the **SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS OF THE YEAR category** (and is an EW business by Dec. 31, 09) will be automatically considered as an **EW Business of the Year** candidate as well. Also, you may self-nominate and are encouraged to do so.



More green purchasing? What about your toilet paper?

George Costanza of Seinfeld once said that toilet paper hasn't changed in his lifetime and probably wouldn't change in the next 50,000 years. While it's true that toilet paper as we know it today hasn't changed much, our consumption has. In fact, the average U.S. consumer uses more than 20,805 sheets annually, contributing to a \$5.7 billion bathroom tissue industry.

When you think of producers of greenhouse gas emissions, pollution and resource depletion, toilet paper probably doesn't join the list of products and industries that come to mind. But the natural resources that go into toilet paper production should be taken into account. According to some estimates, approximately 7 million trees are used each year to supply the U.S.'s toilet paper demand.

Tiny Roll, Big Impact

The idea of using virgin wood for throwaway paper products seems silly, but it happens nearly 99 percent of the time. Toilet paper made of 100 percent recycled paper fiber makes up less than 2% of the market in the U.S.

However, toilet paper made of 100 percent recycled paper content including high percentages of post-consumer recycled fibers, is becoming easier to find as national chain stores now carry major brands like Seventh Generation and Marcal.

Marcal Manufacturing, LLC, the maker of Small Steps 100-percent recycled paper products, processes more than 200,000 tons of recyclable paper each year to create more than 12 million cases of paper products annually. The recycled paper fibers come from magazines, school papers, flyers and mail, 40 percent of which would ordinarily end up in the landfill.

"We're a small company from New Jersey, but small as we may be, we make a big difference," Lindsay Jacob, brand ambassador for Marcal Manufacturing, tells Earth911. "Since 1950, we've been making paper products from paper. We've never made paper from trees and are proud of that."

Marcal's CEO, Tim Spring, wants his company to be an industry changer. "We take our commitment to changing the paper industry very seriously, and we will continue to raise awareness of just how beneficial trees are to the environment," said Spring. "Knowing that millions of trees are being cut down each year just to be flushed down the toilet is just not an acceptable option."

It Doesn't Stop at Toilet Paper

According to the American Forest and Paper Association, tissue-grade papers are generally categorized into three major categories: at-home (consumer), away-from-home (commercial and industry) and specialty. Around the home, they are found in the forms of toilet and facial tissue, paper towels, napkins and other sanitary items. They also represent decorative and specialty papers such as wrapping tissue, dry cleaning paper and crepe paper.

Tissue-grade papers are typically made from virgin fiber rather than recycled fibers and are bleached with chlorine to make them look whiter and brighter. Like toilet paper, these tissue grades are widely available with recycled fiber content and chlorine-free bleach.

The Soiled Paper Dilemma

While tissue-grade paper is made from, well, paper, this particular material is actually not recyclable due to the nature of its usage. When we add grease to a paper towel, food residue to napkins and you-know-what to toilet and facial tissue, these items are typically rendered non-recyclable.

When paper products are recycled, they are mixed with water and turned into a slurry. Grease, oils and other soiling materials form at the top of the slurry and paper fibers cannot separate from the oils during the pulping process, rendering the batch useless.

"The oil causes great problems for the quality of the paper, especially the binding of the fibers," said Terry Gellenbeck, a solid waste administrative analyst for the City of Phoenix. "It puts in contaminants, so when they do squeeze the water out, it has spots and holes."

Other products typically found on paper products, like ink, tend to break down fast as they are usually non-petroleum based.



For Inquiring minds- A look at ocean plastic

Serious Sand: Lessons from Midway

Thursday, January 28, 7:00-8:00 p.m.

Loucks Auditorium, Salem Public Library

585 Liberty St. SE, Salem

Ron Hirschi, wildlife author and scientist, will showcase images from his recent journey to Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument and present a conversation about how plastic has gone micro in the marine environment. He'll also discuss his actions since returning from Midway (Pihemanu in Hawaiian), along with news from other participants in the journey to Papahānaumokuākea and how he works with kids to rid the world of plastic.

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**EarthWISE Member Directory**

**We welcome our new members\*!**

Construction

Advantage Precast, Inc.  
 Barnwood Naturals, LLC\*  
 Carlson Veit Architects, P.C.  
 CB | 2 Architects  
 Cherry City Heating  
 Cherry City Remodeling  
 dalke construction  
 LCG Pence Construction

Financial

Oregon Community Credit Union  
 Wilshire Credit Corporation

Food

Bentley's Grill  
 Cascade Baking  
 Kerr Concentrates, Inc.\*  
 NORPAC Foods - Stayton, Brooks, & Salem Plants  
 Sabroso Company  
 Spring Valley Dairy  
 Truitt Brothers, Inc.  
 Willamette Valley Fruit Company

Government

Champoeg State Heritage Area  
 Marion County Public Works—Environmental Services  
 Oregon Department of Energy  
 Oregon State Capitol  
 State of Oregon—Salem Motor Pool  
 City of Salem Fire Department\*  
 City of Salem—Information Technology  
 City of Salem—Urban Development's Director's Office  
 Salem Public Library  
 Woodburn School District

Landscaping

DeSantis Landscapes, Inc.  
 The Garden Angels  
 Green Acres Landscape, Inc.

Medical

Holly Chamberlain D.D.S., L.L.C.  
 Chiropractic Physicians, P.C.  
 Oregon Center of Cosmetic and Family Dentistry  
 Willamette E.N.T. & Facial Plastic Surgery, LLP

Not For Profit

Garten Services, Inc.  
 SAIF Corporation  
 Saint Edward Catholic Church  
 United Way of the Mid-Willamette Valley  
 Willamette Lutheran Retirement Community\*

Professional/Services

AJ's Auto Repair, Inc.  
 Cascade Employer's Association\*  
 Compex Two Computers  
 Hillyer's Mid-City Ford  
 Kristin LaMont, Attorney at Law P.C.  
 Lancaster Mall Operations  
 Performance Health Technology  
 T-Mobile

Real Estate

Coldwell Banker Commercial/Mountain West Real Estate,LLC  
 Sperry Van Ness Commercial Advisors\*

Recycling/Solid Waste

Agri-Plas, Inc.  
 D & O Garbage Service Inc.  
 Marion Recycling Center  
 Pacific Sanitation

Tourism

Phoenix Grand Hotel  
 Salem Conference Center  
 Travel Salem



**Marion County Public Works –  
Environmental Services  
EarthWISE Business Program**

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***Workplace Initiative for  
Sustainable Enterprise***

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

HTTP://

WWW.CO.MARION.OR.

US/PW/ES/

EARTHWISE

To learn more about the EarthWISE business assistance program, visit our website or give us a call. We're excited to work with you. If you would like to be added to the Sustainable Business Bulletin email list send an email to:

[earthwise@co.marion.or.us](mailto:earthwise@co.marion.or.us) with "add Sustainable Business Bulletin" in the subject box. To be removed from the list, put "remove" in the subject box.

