



Green Cleaners and Alternatives in School Facilities Services

A Series of Best Management Practices

Schools are one of the most important places to utilize best management practices (BMPs) regarding non-toxic earth-friendly cleaners. Facilities services manage most of the cleaners involved with the maintenance of the school. By choosing green cleaning practices with non-toxic cleaners, children, teachers, and other school employees will benefit from a healthier environment in which to work and learn.

Getting started

1. Conducting an inventory is the best place to start. (Please Refer to the BMP for *Conducting a Chemical Inventory* for guidance on how to conduct an inventory and what to include in them).
2. After the inventory is complete, check to see what chemicals are shared between departments. These departments should communicate before more is purchased and brainstorm to come up with less toxic substitutions.

Product and method substitutions

1. Substitute chlorine or bleach-based scouring agents, such as those used for toilets and metal cleaning, with more earth-friendly ones, such as baking soda.
2. Cornstarch can be used to shampoo carpets and rugs. Ask your contracted carpet cleaning company to use alternative non-toxic products.
3. Borax can be used to clean floors, wallpaper, and painted walls. When replacing flooring, choose low maintenance flooring that is chlorine-free and low-VOC. These floors are far more durable and do not require the harsh cleaning or waxing of older types of flooring.
4. Substitute harsh solvents with citrus based solvent to clean paintbrushes, oil and grease.
5. Cleaning suppliers have effective non-toxic substitutions for nearly every chemical cleaner used in schools; make it a policy to request these alternatives.

Guidelines for storing chemicals

- Store chemicals/cleaners in a room with an impervious floor, e.g., concrete, pavement, or tile.
- Cover floor drains if they lead to a septic or sewer system.
- Clearly label all chemical containers.
- Covers must be securely on ALL chemical containers when not in use.
- Store chemicals closest to the floor.
- Keep out of reach of children and locked away in a secure location.
- Store chemicals according to hazard types and compatibility, not alphabetically.



New Hampshire Pollution Prevention in Schools Project

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