

**PUTNAM VALLEY
CENTRAL SCHOOL
DISTRICT
PUTNAM VALLEY, NY**

**MS4PY5 STORMWATER
PROGRAM**

**FACT SHEET # 3
MARCH, 2015**

**NYS GREEN CLEANING
PRODUCTS AND GREEN
CLEANING PROGRAMS:
RE-VISITED**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT
YOUR STORMWATER COORDINATOR:**

**PATRICK BELLINO AT:
845-528-8143 OR AT
pbellino@pvcsd.org**

**1. Highlights of the NYS Green Cleaning Products
Laws of 2005**

On September 1, 2006, New York became the first state to mandate the use in schools of green cleaning products that are both environmentally sensitive and environmentally sustainable. This fact sheet contains highlights of the School Green Cleaning Product Law, extracted from the NYS Office of General Services (OGS) website. Over the past few years, since the law was enacted, OGS and its Environmental Services Unit have developed various Policies, Guidelines and Reports pertaining to the Green Cleaning Program. For details and more information of the law, you should contact OGS directly.

2. Applicability of the Law

The NYS Green Cleaning Law, which pertains to both green cleaning products as well as green cleaning (Green Cleaning Program), applies to all state agencies and public and nonpublic elementary and secondary schools. Note the law does not supersede or change existing health, labor, education and environmental regulations, related to cleaning and maintenance practices and the disposal of hazardous chemicals. The Office of the State Comptroller audits schools to determine their compliance with implementing the provisions of the law. Accordingly, to meet this mandate and reporting requirements, schools are advised to document the cleaning products purchased and the products replaced. It is the responsibility of the school to document its adherence/compliance to the laws.

3. The Purpose of the Law

The NYS Green Cleaning Program was introduced to reduce, as much as possible, **exposure of children and school staff to potentially harmful chemicals** and substances used in the cleaning and maintenance of school facilities, based on the following facts about the school environment:

- **Air Pollutants Levels:** USEPA estimates that air pollutants levels can be two to five times, and occasionally up to 100 times, higher indoors than outdoors
- **Exposure to Chemicals:** Children are more vulnerable than adults and may be severely affected by the exposure to chemicals, hazardous wastes and other environmental hazards
- **School Building Occupancy:** Children, teachers, and employees spend a significant amount of time in school buildings that may contain harmful chemicals from cleaners and other maintenance products

- **Number of Occupants:** schools have four times the number of occupants per square foot than most buildings
- **Increased Occurrence of Asthma:** Studies have shown links between chemicals used in institutional cleaning products and the increased occurrence of asthma and reproductive harm
- **Reduced Ecosystem Damage:** Reducing the use of toxic cleaning products will reduce the amount of hazardous waste requiring disposal and causing damage to our environment

4. The Ownership of the Program

The responsibility (ownership) of the program does not fall solely upon the custodial staff of the District. Stakeholders involve the entire District Community comprised of the administrative and supervisory personnel, teachers, students, school board members and various parent-teachers groups.

5. Green Cleaning Products and Green Cleaning Procedures

The term green cleaning products and green cleaning refers to the cleaning products as well effective cleaning procedures utilized to minimize adverse impacts on human health and the environment from potentially harmful chemicals

- Green cleaning is more than just switching to green cleaning products.
- A well designed cleaning program uses a holistic approach to facility cleaning and maintenance, and includes green cleaning products approved by the OGS, as well as comprehensive custodial training program
- The cleaning program should reduce levels of chemicals, mold and airborne dust and promote a healthier learning environment for children and a safer workplace for staff.

6. Green Seal Environmental Standards

Conventional cleaning products should not be used at schools as they contain chemicals that are very harmful to humans and the environment. Green Seal, a non-profit organization that provides science-based environmental certification standards has developed:

- Environmental Stands for General-Purpose, Bathroom, Glass and Carpet Cleaners used for Industrial and Institutional Purposes under GS-37, which establishes certification requirements for safer and less harmful cleaning products
- Under GS-37 standard for Green Seal certification, products must meet requirements for toxic compounds, carcinogens and reproductive toxins, skin and eye irritation, skin sensitization, and combustibility, as well as life cycle analysis from production to disposal

7. OGS Approved Products

There is a list of approved products that meet OGS guidelines and specifications for environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products. There are several categories of OGS-approved products:

- General Purpose cleaners:** This category includes products for cleaning hard surfaces, including impervious flooring such as concrete, stone surfaces or tile. It does not include strippers, polishers or floor waxing products
- Restroom Cleaners:** This category includes products for cleaning hard surfaces in a restrooms, such as counters, walls, floors, fixtures, basins, tubs, toilets, urinals and tile
- Toilet Bowl Cleaners:** This category includes products for cleaning toilet bowls or urinals
- Carpet Cleaners:** This category includes products for cleaning of carpets and rugs , but is not limited to wet extraction, shampooing, dry foam, or absorbent compounds
- Carpet Spot Removers:** This category includes products for spot removal of stains on carpets and rugs by means of extraction, shampooing, dry foam, or absorbent compounds
- Glass, Window, and Mirror Cleaners:** This category includes products for cleaning windows, glass, dry erase boards, and mirrored surfaces
- Vacuum Cleaners:** Vacuum cleaners consist of general purpose vacuums approved for use on all conventional carpet styles and vacuums approved for use on carpet with a low pile, or surface texture, measuring approximately one quarter inch or less

h. Hand Cleaners/Hand Soaps: Hand soaps are designed to be used with water to remove both organic and inorganic soil from skin

- With the exception of floor finishes and floor strippers, OGS has developed green cleaning guidelines and a list of approved products to help in this process
- Except for floor finishes and floor strippers, unless Green Seal or Ecologo has certified the product, OGS cannot approve other products for use in schools
- There is no evidence that bio-based (naturally derived) products are less likely to affect the health of the building occupants than other approved products
- For instance, natural or naturally occurring products like citrus-based (from orange or lemon peels) products contain terpenes that on contact with air, are oxidized to form a sensitizing chemical that can affect human health

8. Disposal of Floor Finish Strippers and Floor Wax Solutions

At this time, OGS does not have published standards or guidelines for floor finish and floor strippers (GS-40). Floor Finish Strippers and waxes contain numerous hazardous chemicals, which can adversely affect the environment. Most communities limit the amount of zinc, present in strippers that you may discharge into the sewer system. Accordingly, the following compliance steps should be strictly adhered by the District:

- **Temporary Onsite Storage:** Collect and store used floor strippers and floor wax solutions in labelled hazardous waste containers
- **Disposal by a Licensed Company:** Contact a licensed hazardous waste disposal firm to collect and safely dispose of your used strippers and wax solutions

- **Environmental Impact:** Do not discharge used waste products onto the ground, grass or storm sewer drains

9. Products by Vendors and Third-Party Organizations

The characterization of a product as green does not mean that the products will satisfy the requirements of the Law, or that such a product is on the OGS list of acceptable products. The District should use discretion when consulting with vendors, shopping for green cleaning and maintenance products, and when testing these products in their facilities

10. An Effective Green Cleaning Program

One of the first steps to developing an effective green cleaning program is to develop a baseline facility assessment as follows:

- First establish current facility conditions related to the physical layout, population served, cleaning tasks, custodial resources, team leaders, cleaning and chemical inventories, complaints and training programs
- From this baseline, goals and objectives should be established to determine the effectiveness of the Green Cleaning Program

11. Compliance Measures and Recommendations

- **Custodial Staff Training:** One of the first steps you should take is to consult with your supervisor about receiving training on the District Green Cleaning Program
- **Equipment Operation:** Be sure you understand how the cleaning equipment operates or its intended use
- **Use of Approved Equipment:** Only use approved OGS equipment
- **Approved Cleaning Products:** Only use approved OGS Cleaning Products
- **Follow Manufacturer Instructions on Product Use:** Strictly adhere to manufacturer instructions on product use
- **Disposal of Spent Floor Strippers and Floor Waxes:** Do not discharge used waste products onto the ground, grass or storm sewer drains. Contact a licensed hazardous waste disposal firm to collect and safely dispose of your used strippers and wax solutions
- **If not Certain, Consult your Supervisor:** Always consult your supervisor if you have questions on how a product should be used and how residual waste resulting from the cleaning should be disposed