



Make the Switch!

Your guide to product replacement: Choosing greener, healthier, and safer products

Green & Clean Program
Boston Public Health Commission



Why Should You Choose Green Products?

1. Protect your health

- Prevent short- and long-term health issues

2. Protect the environment

- Prevent pollution, global warming

3. Be safer

- Green alternatives:
 - Are not corrosive
 - Meet strict standards for toxicity (inhalation), combustibility, and skin absorption
 - Meet environmental standards

Why Should You Choose Green Products?

Personal Health

- The ingredients in many “regular products” are associated with short- and long-term health issues such as eye, respiratory and skin burns or irritations, allergies, headaches, chemical poisoning, nausea, reproductive hazards, and certain cancers
 - Sometimes, people can become more sensitive to the chemicals in cleaning products over time
- Fragrances
 - Add chemicals to the air
 - Can cause headaches, sneezing, watery eyes, etc. and can trigger asthma or allergic reactions for both workers and customers
 - Over time, you may become more sensitive or allergic to scents
 - Where you find them: cleaning products that say “fresh flower scent” or similar



Environmental health

- Some products and ingredients can pollute our environments (air and water) and may affect global warming

Safety

- Many products contain ingredients that are combustible, corrosive, and toxic
- Alternative products are safer for you to use

General Business Products: What to Look For

- **Light bulbs:** Make sure they are low mercury or fluorescent LED
- **Shop laundry:** If you send it out, choose a business that uses professional wet methods, not perchloroethylene (perc for short)
- **Air fresheners:** Don't use them!
 - This means no car hanging rearview mirror air fresheners, plug-in air fresheners, spray air fresheners in bathrooms, etc.
- **Paper products** (copy paper, paper towels, coffee filters, toilet paper, etc.): Use only unbleached and/or chlorine-free paper made from at least 50% recycled content



- **Thermostats:** Digital, programmable thermostats
- **Light switches:** Sensor-activated or run on a timer
- **Sinks:** Sensor activated or spring-loaded



Cleaning Products: What to Look For

- Look for cleaning products that DO NOT contain ANY of the following 13 ingredients:
 - Hydrochloric Acid
 - Toluene
 - Phosphoric Acid
 - Alkyl Phenol Ethoxylates
 - Sodium Hydroxide
 - Bleach (Sodium Hypochlorite)
 - Sodium Metasilicate
 - Paradichlorobenzene (Urinal Blocks)
 - Potassium Hydroxide
 - Quaternary Ammonium Chloride NH_4Cl
 - Butoxyethanol
 - Ammonia (NH_3)
 - Ethanolamine

Cleaning Products: What to Look For

- Look for cleaning products that have one or more of the following logos
 - EPA Safer Choice/Design for the Environment, Green Seal Certified, and EcoLogo Certified products have been recognized as better for health and for the environment because they are made without many harmful chemicals



- We recommend that you visit the following websites to review the full list of cleaning product options you have:
 - Safer Choice/Design for the Environment:
<https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice/products>
 - Green Seal Certified:
<http://www.greenseal.org/FindGreenSealProductsandServices.aspx?vid=ViewProductDetail&cid=0&sid=1>
 - EcoLogo Certified:
<http://industries.ul.com/environment/certificationvalidation-marks/ecologo-product-certification#cleaning>

But I Want to Use a Fragrance

- Unfortunately, there is no alternative fragrance that can be used
- 1 in 3 of the ingredients used in the fragrance industry are toxic, according to the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
- Instead, use air circulation and ventilation to disperse smells

But it says “green” on it!

- **Green Washing**

- Some companies claim their products are safer alternatives through advertising and marketing, but do not make their products with healthier ingredients
- These products will not be labeled with the EPA Safer Choice/Design for the Environment, EcoLogic, or Green Seal logos
- These products will instead be labeled with other seals as well as words like:
 - Green
 - Healthy
 - Ecofriendly
 - Natural
 - Organic



What Chemicals Should I Avoid?

- **Chlorines:** Methylene chloride, trichloroethylene, etc.
- **Petroleum hydrocarbons:** Mineral spirits, toluene, xylene, ethylbenzene
- **Other solvents:** Acetone, butoxyethanol, heptane, butyl cellosolve (ethylene glycol monobutyl ether), etc.
- **Other chemicals:** Diethanolamine (DEA), triethanolamine (TEA), hydrochloric acid, ammonia, etc.
- **Many of the above chemicals are:**
 - Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
 - Gases that are emitted from solids and liquids
 - Have short- and long-term health effects
 - Found in: paints, aerosols sprays, glues, inks, automotive products, etc.
 - Carcinogens
 - Cancer-causing substances
 - Found in many auto shop products and cleaning products
 - Dispensed from aerosol cans



Auto Body Shop Products: What to Use Instead

- **Body Shop**

- Collapsible, closable plastic paint cups
- EPA Safer Choice/Design for the Environment solvents in paint gun washer
- Water-based paints
- Windshield replacement
- Use a company that recycles glass



- **Auto Repair Shop**

- Aqueous soy-based brake cleaners, engine degreasers, fuel injectors
- Antifreeze: Recycle it, either on-site or contract out
- Brake pads labeled 'asbestos-free'
- Wheel weights that are lead-free
- Solvents: Use only non-chlorinated solvents or Safer Choice/Design for the Environment solvents
 - Two options:
 1. Contract out with a company that cleans, filters, and recycles solvents
 2. Use a sink that recirculates and filters solvent solution
- Water-based brake cleaners
- Water-based parts washers
- Radiator flush that has been recycled using an on-site, closed loop, recirculating flush system



- **Watch out for:** Aerosol spray cans (degreasers/solvents for parts washing, etc.)

Thank You

- Questions?
- For more information:
 - Please call the Safe Shops Program at 617-534-5965
 - Or visit www.bphc.org/safeshops or www.bphc.org/greenandclean