



ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR CLEANING SUPPLIES

The District of Columbia is committed to procuring quality goods and services in a timely manner and reasonable cost that support the District in meeting its sustainability goals. Compliance with specification guidance is sufficient to meet PPRA Section 1101(a) environmentally preferable procurement requirements. To access solicitation documents with full contract language, click [here](#).



BENEFITS

1 IN 3

Commercial cleaning products contain ingredients that are potentially harmful to human health. Green cleaning products are safer and less toxic.

3,200

Pounds of hazardous materials were eliminated in Santa Monica annually after the jurisdiction switched to green cleaning products.

SOURCE

RPN Responsible
Purchasing Guide: Cleaners

Use the [Green Cleaning Calculator](#) to estimate the benefits for *your* building from switching to green cleaning!

Scope

This specification addresses the product categories listed below. Full definitions for each product type can be found in the solicitation documents.

PRODUCT CATEGORY 1: CLEANING AND DISINFECTING PRODUCTS

1. General purpose (all purpose) cleaners and degreasers
2. Bathroom cleaners (including but not limited to: hard surface cleaners, toilet bowl cleaners, urinal cleaners, and deodorizers)
3. Glass, mirror, and window cleaners
4. Carpet, rug, and upholstery cleaners (including products used for routine cleaning and spot cleaning)
5. Disinfectants (including general disinfectants and bathroom disinfectants)
6. Floor cleaners, strippers, sealers, and finishes
7. Hand soaps, hand cleaners, and hand sanitizers

PRODUCT CATEGORY 2: MISCELLANEOUS JANITORIAL PRODUCTS

1. Vacuum cleaners
2. Mops, cloths, and sponges
3. Protective gloves
4. Paper towels
5. Toilet paper
6. Trash bin liners
7. Recycling bin liners
8. Composting bin liners

Specification Language

Cleaning products purchased by the District of Columbia shall meet the environmental criteria defined below:

PRODUCT CATEGORY 1: CLEANING AND DISINFECTING PRODUCTS

1. Products shall carry at least **ONE** (1) of the following labels: Green Seal, EcoLogo, or EPA Design for the Environment (DfE).
2. Products shall include a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and product label with a list of ingredients and instructions for proper handling.
3. The product manufacturer or contractor shall offer training on the proper use of the product upon request from the District.



Specification Language (continued)

4. Products shall not use aerosols.

PRODUCT CATEGORY 2: MISCELLANEOUS JANITORIAL PRODUCTS

Products purchased by the District shall meet the following criteria:

1. Vacuum cleaners shall have high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters.
2. Microfiber mops, cloths, and sponges shall be purchased instead of cotton.
3. Protective gloves shall not contain PVC or vinyl.
4. Paper towels shall contain at least 40% postconsumer recycled content (PCRC).
5. Toilet paper shall contain at least 20% PCRC.
6. Trash bin and recycling bin liners shall contain at least 10% PCRC or have a thickness of less than 0.7 ml.
7. Recycling bin liners shall be clear, white, or natural in color.
8. Composting bin liners shall be Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified to meet the ASTM D6400 standard for commercial compostability of plastics.

Reporting

At the frequency specified in the solicitation, the Contractor shall submit to the Contracting Officer an Environmentally Preferable Products and Services (EPPS) Report, indicating that the products supplied to the District comply with the District's EPPS criteria. The following information shall be included in the report:

- a. Contractor name
- b. Contract #
- c. PO #
- d. Contract award date
- e. Product description - manufacturer description of product
- f. Sku
- g. Corresponding environmentally preferable product type based on the product types listed in the scope section of the Environmental Guidance Document for Cleaning Supplies (ex. Toilet paper)
- h. Number of units sold
- i. Price per unit
- j. Total cost
- k. Compliance with DC environmental criteria – Indicate how each product purchased is compliant with DC environmental requirements (ex. Green Seal certification). If the environmental requirement was not specified in the solicitation, indicate NA.

An EPPS Report template is available to assist Contractors in meeting the District's EPPS reporting requirements on the [Sustainable Purchasing Program web page](#).



Background Information



Green Seal is a non-profit standard-setting organization certifying a range of products and services. Green Seal conducts scientific testing and on-site audits to verify that products meet recognized standards. Relevant standards include: GS-01: Sanitary Paper Products; GS-34: Cleaning and Degreasing Agents; GS-37: Cleaning Products for Industrial and Institutional Use; GS-40: Floor-Care Products; GS-41: Hand Cleaners; and GS-53: Specialty Cleaning Products. Green Seal cleaning products are widely available and commonly specified by jurisdictions throughout the United States. Certified products can be found at www.greenseal.org/FindGreenSealProductsAndServices.aspx



Managed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the **Design for the Environment (DfE)** program screens products for potential human and environmental hazards and only labels products with ingredients that pose the least concern among chemicals in their class. A variety of cleaning products carry the DfE logo, including: all-purpose cleaners; carpet cleaners; floor cleaners, finishers, and strippers; hand soaps; toilet bowl cleaners; and window/glass cleaners. EPA lists all labeled products at www.epa.gov/dfepubs/projects/formulat/formpart.htm. Several jurisdictions specify products with the DfE label.



Postconsumer recycled content (PCRC) reflects the proportion of a product recycled from consumer materials that otherwise would have been disposed. Consistent with U.S. EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines, this specification requires purchasing janitorial paper products with varying levels of recycled content. The Guidelines serve as the model for specifications in many jurisdictions around the country. Other forms of recycled content not included in the specification include pre-consumer recycled content and total recycled content. Pre-consumer recycled content refers to the percent of a product made from manufacturing waste, while total recycled content refers to the sum of the postconsumer and pre-consumer recycled content. Note that the recycled content logo is not required. For more information, see EPA's product category definitions at epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/tools/cpg/products/define.htm.



High-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuum cleaners trap dust and other irritants, improving indoor air quality. HEPA air filters are designed according to federal standards to remove 99.97% of airborne particles measuring 0.3 micrometers in diameter. By trapping harmful particles such as dust mites and pollen, HEPA filters prevent or reduce health problems such as allergies and asthma.

This specification prohibits use of **aerosols**. While the risks posed by aerosols have changed over the past few decades, these products continue to pose health and safety concerns. The Montreal Protocol (1987) banned the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) – an ingredient previously used in aerosols that damages the ozone layer. Aerosols no longer contain CFCs. However, aerosols still create a fine mist of liquid particles that can be inhaled by humans. Scientists believe that the particles of the propellants (which are used to push the spray out of the can) might “piggy-back” on the fine mist, entering the lungs and bloodstream and causing health problems. There are also documented cases of aerosol abuse where individuals deliberately inhale the product, which can starve the brain of oxygen and may result in death. Aerosols commonly use propane, butane, and other flammable substances that can pose a fire hazard. Finally, aerosols can cause skin irritation, known as “aerosol burn.” Using **pump sprays** instead of aerosols protects the health and safety of cleaning staff and building occupants.



Background Information (continued)

This specification prohibits the purchase of gloves made with **vinyl (PVC or polyvinyl chloride)**. PVC is made from vinyl chloride and a variety of additives, often including a class of chemicals called phthalates. Many types of phthalates used to manufacture PVC are included on California's Proposition 65 List for carcinogenicity and reproductive toxicity. The additives can be released when flexible PVC is bent through off-gassing. Vinyl chloride, the base material used to make PVC, is classified as a human carcinogen by the U.S. EPA. Plants that manufacture PVC may emit vinyl chloride during manufacture, exposing workers and the local community to a carcinogenic compound. More information about PVC is available at: http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/text_version/chemicals.php?id=84



This specification requires bin liners used to collect and transport waste for composting are **Biodegradable Product Institute (BPI) certified** to meet the ASTM D6400 standard for commercial compostability of plastics. This means that the products have been independently tested and verified to decompose in industrial or municipal facilities without leaving behind harmful toxics or plastic residues.

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Microfiber mops, cloths, and sponges have several benefits over cotton. First, microfiber traps dirt from surface cracks and crevices that cotton cleaning products are too large to reach. Second, microfiber requires less water and chemicals than conventional cotton cleaning products. Third, using microfiber instead of cotton helps preserve surface finishes by not leaving scratches. Fourth, microfiber mops are lightweight and safer to use than conventional mops. Finally, microfiber cleaning products can save money in the long run by using less water and chemicals, increasing productivity, and preventing injuries.



EcoLogo certifications are managed by UL, a global safety science company. Similar to Green Seal, EcoLogo certifies cleaning and other types of products based on scientific testing and third-party audits. Relevant standards include: UL2784/CCD-104: Hand Cleaners; UL2796/CCD 107: Odor Control Products; UL2792/CCD-110: Cleaning and Degreasing Compounds; UL2759/CCD-146: Hardsurface Cleaners; UL2777/CCD-147: Hard Floor Care Products; UL2795/CCD-148: Carpet and Upholstery Cleaners; UL2783/CCD-170: Instant Hand Antiseptics; and UL175: Sanitary Paper Products. Compliant products are listed in UL's Sustainable Product Guide. EcoLogo cleaning products are widely available, and are specified by several jurisdictions throughout the country.

Environmental Hotspots Key human health and environmental benefits associated with this specification

WATER CONSUMPTION Microfiber mops, cloths, and sponges use less liquid than cotton, which reduces water and chemical use.

RECYCLED CONTENT This specification requires PCRC for janitorial paper products, which reduces the demand for virgin wood.

TOXICITY/HEAVY METALS This specification prohibits or restricts certain toxic chemicals that have been linked to serious health problems for building occupants and janitorial staff, including asthma, reproductive problems, and cancer. The specification also requires training to minimize adverse impacts from product use. In addition, HEPA vacuums use filters that trap dust and other irritants, improving indoor air quality.

PACKAGING Green Seal, EcoLogo, and DfE require less material-intensive packaging methods and/or recycled content for packaging of their certified products.

END-OF-LIFE DISPOSAL Green Seal, EcoLogo, and DfE require distributors to offer training or information on proper disposal methods to reduce adverse impacts on health and the environment.



Significance to the District

PPRA PPRA § 104 specifies that products meet Default Environmental Standards. U.S. EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines for post-consumer recycled content (PCRC), Green Seal, Eco Logo, and EPA's DfE label all are Default Environmental Standards (DES).

LEGISLATION Healthy Schools Act of 2010, Section 501 requires the use of environmentally friendly cleaning supplies in public schools.

LEED FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS: O&M LEED v4 awards one point for Indoor Environmental Quality: Green Cleaning—Products and Materials if at least 75%, by cost, of the total annual purchases of these products meet green cleaning requirements. This covers Green Seal, Eco Logo, DfE, and CPG for janitorial paper products and trash bin liners.

For more information about sustainable specification guidance or the District's Sustainable Purchasing Program, please visit: <http://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing>, call the OCP Customer Contact Center at: [202.724.4477](tel:202.724.4477), or email sppdc@dc.gov