

References:

1. National Center for Health Statistics <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/asthma.htm>
2. VOCs-Volatile Organic Compounds: <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html>
3. Green Seal™ Certification- <http://www.greenseal.org/>
4. LEED-Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
<http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=222>
5. OSHA-Occupational and Safety Health Association www.osha.gov
6. ISO-14001-International Organization for Standardization, environmental management certifications
http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_14000_essentials
7. Climate Neutral Certification™ by the Climate Neutral Network
www.climateutralnetwork.org/intro.php
8. Climate Protection Award <http://www.epa.gov/cppd/climateawards/>

Additional Resources:

Indoor Environmental Quality: http://ieq.nibs.org/ieq_project.pdf
<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/ia-intro.html#Indoor%20Air%20Pollution%20and%20Health>
Design for the Environment: www.epa.gov/dfe/
Green Chemistry: www.epa.gov/greenchemistry/
SCS-Scientific Certification Systems: www.scscertified.com
The Green Guide's List of "Ingredients to Avoid"
<http://www.thegreenguide.com/gg/pdf/ggCleanProd.pdf>

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The preceding product descriptions are based on the knowledge and research of the author, Jessica Stonberg. This list includes products that the author knows of as being "green." The author does not intend to advocate any one product over another but instead hopes to create discussion on the growing availability of such products. The content is a combination of data collected from the individual companies' websites along with additional information added in the opinion of the writer. The views of the writer are her own and do not reflect the views of the site they are posted on, other sites that are affiliated with this site, or the staff involved with this site.

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The Greener You Are, The Cleaner You Are

Go green by investing in green cleaning products that are safe and healthy for your office, your colleagues, and the environment.



On average, Americans spend about 90% of their time indoors. The rising levels of disease and respiratory illnesses such as asthma have been attributed to the standards of our indoor living and work environments. The numbers of Americans who suffer from illnesses related to air quality have increased steadily. For example, cases of people who suffer from asthma have increased dramatically over the past thirty years to reach today's count of over 17 million people in the nation.¹ Those numbers along with related visits to the emergency room, medication costs, and deaths continue to increase. These health issues translate into serious economic setbacks in terms of productivity and health care costs when operating a business. This can be avoided by minimizing absenteeism and linking worker health with productivity through better management of our interior work environments.

Indoor environmental quality (IEQ) is an essential element considered when designing and managing green offices. Also called indoor *air* quality, these terms refer to the air quality of an interior space. Creating a high quality and toxic-free environment means that your space won't compromise the health of its inhabitants or of the surrounding natural environment.



While building and design materials contribute to the livable quality of our offices, the products we use to maintain the space also play a role in IEQ. Some of the more toxic materials available on the market are those that we use day after day to clean our offices, community spaces, restrooms and kitchens. In addition, once we pour these products out or combine them with outgoing water sources, they continue their path to landfills or through our waterways into soils, rarely breaking down to return to the natural environment in a harmless way. To ensure a truly healthy indoor environment for you and your co-workers, purchase cleaning products that clean your space naturally and that you can feel good about sending down the drain.

With the growing popularity in "greener" choices for human and environmental health, there are more and more products available to help you. It is becoming more difficult however, to know where truth ends and good marketing begins. Remember to be critical and find a product that meets *your* green criteria and principles. Here is a list of some of the leading green products on the market today. Clean on!

Want more information on green building and how to green up your office?

Visit our Online Resource Center at www.nonprofitcenters.org

“[Improvement in indoor environmental quality can] improve office worker productivity by 0.5 to 5 percent, with estimated savings of \$20 to %200 billion dollars.”

-William J. Fisk, “How IEQ Affects Health, Productivity,” ASHRAE Journal, May 2002

Clean Green by Sun Valley Green:

www.sunvalleygreen.com

This environmentally focused company is dedicated to eliminating the use of toxic cleaning products in public areas. They advocate the protection of building occupants, visitors, and especially janitorial staff by manufacturing green cleaning products specific to industrial use. With a multi-purpose cleaner, floor clearer and degreaser, bathroom cleaner and glass cleaner, this group markets a simple and straightforward line of products to help keep your office space clean and toxic-free.

- No petroleum distillates, ammonia, chlorine bleach, or phosphates
- No formaldehyde or any known carcinogens
- No dyes or strong fragrances
- Low VOC² content
- Biodegradable ingredients
- Green Seal™ Certified³
- Recyclable packaging
- Not animal tested

HYPOALLERGENIC—

Non-allergy producing. This is a term applied to the preparation of materials or products in which every possible measure has been taken to ensure minimum instances of allergic reactions when using this product.

-Blakiston's Medical Dictionary

<http://www.allergybuyersclub.com/hypoallergenic.html>

EcoLogic Solutions®:

www.ecologicsolutions.com

This company specializes in cleaning products for the building maintenance, restaurant and hospitality operations industries. They are dedicated to worker safety and the environment, offering a line of Deep Green™ products including all-purpose and deep cleaners, soaps, stainless steel cleaners, sanitizers, and much more.

Using EcoLogic Solutions and their Deep Green™ cleaning program for commercial cleaners can help towards a LEED-EB (Existing Building) certification. By incorporating these toxic-free, safe products and janitorial management details in your office spaces, you can earn up to 14 points towards becoming a LEED certified building.⁴

- 100% plant based ingredients
- Non-polluting, and non-hazardous
- Biodegradable ingredients
- Meet OSHA certification standards⁵
- Super-concentrated to reduce packaging and waste
- Recyclable packaging
- Not animal tested

“U.S. institutions spend more than \$75 million in medical expenses and lost time wages for janitors due to chemical-related injuries.”

-Environmentally Preferable Janitorial Cleaning Products for Commercial Applications, StopWaste.org, May 2006, http://www.stopwaste.org/docs/janitorial_cleaning_products.pdf.

Shaklee®

www.shaklee.com

Founded in 1956 by Dr. Forrest C. Shaklee, the Shaklee® Corporation is certainly among the original companies to dedicate themselves to the production of environmentally friendly cleaners as well as the movement for a more sustainable and socially responsible market. From the introduction of the first biodegradable cleaner, Basic-H® in 1960, this group went on to establish Shaklee Cares® in 1992, a nonprofit dedicated to providing relief from natural disasters such as tornadoes and hurricanes. They became a charter partner of the U.S. EPA's Climate Wise Program in 1998, obtain Climate Neutral Certification™ by the Climate Neutral Network⁷ in 2000, and receive EPA's Climate Protection Award⁸ in 2002.

Product lines include laundry and dish detergents, sponges and clothes, all-purpose cleaners, and stain removers.

- No VOCs, chlorine bleach, or hazardous ingredients
- Biodegradable ingredients
- Recyclable packaging
- Green Seal™ Certified
- Not tested on animals

Simple Green®:

www.simplegreen.com

Manufacturing green products for over thirty years, Simple Green® by Sunshine Makers, Inc. was certainly one of the first companies to market products of this “eco-caliber” for the home and industry. Their company is very active in promoting community activity and represents what it means to be socially responsible. Sunshine Makers, Inc. also works in partnership with their local community conservancy groups to protect and restore the surrounding environment.

This company works extensively to reduce their collective carbon footprint through water conservation, energy reduction, volunteering within the community, charitable contribution, and carbon-reduced processes.

- Non-flammable, non-abrasive cleaners
- No ammonia, bleach, citrus oils or extracts, or petroleum distillates
- Biodegradable ingredients
- Concentrated formulas to reduce waste and packaging
- Recyclable packaging
- Green Seal™ Certified
- Not tested on animals

Cleaning products were responsible for 10% of all toxic-exposures reported to U.S. Poison Control Centers in 2000, accounting for over 200,000 calls.

-Product Report, Household Cleaning Supplies, The Green Guide, March 2006.

GreenWorks™ from Clorox®:

www.greenworkscleaners.com

This brand new line of “natural” cleaners from Clorox® is one of the first green lines from a major consumer products company. GreenWorks™ is being endorsed by the Sierra Club who will display their logo on the bottles, also marking a first for this nonprofit to give its approval to a household cleaner. The hopes of both groups are to make these kinds of products accessible to more people.

GreenWorks™ is certainly better than a conventional cleaner but it is in no way perfect. Some of the products are colored green with preservatives and colorants. Also this line of “all-natural” cleaners in no way means that Clorox® has gone completely green. But it is a good sign that they are beginning to recognize the direction of the market and consumer concerns about health and the environment.

GreenWorks™ offers an all-purpose cleaner, toilet bowl cleaner, concentrated cleaner, bathroom cleaner, and a glass and surface cleaner.

- Ingredients listed on the label are 99% natural content and 99% petrochemical free
- Most ingredients plant and mineral based
- Biodegradable ingredients
- GreenWorks™ not tested on animals

Seventh Generation®:

www.seventhgeneration.com/index.php

Seventh Generation® which was previously named Renew America is one of the country’s leaders in non-toxic and environmentally safe household and office cleaners. It is a company dedicated to maintaining safe indoor air quality and the environment. The company’s name comes from the Gayaneshak-gowa, the Great Law of Peace of the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy that says “in our every deliberation we must consider the impact of our decisions on the next seven generations.”

Lines include vegetable based cleaners, recycled paper products, and plastic trash bags made from 65-100% recycled plastic.

- No chlorine, ammonia, harsh acids, or caustics
- No petroleum based ingredients
- Biodegradable ingredients
- 25% post-consumer recycled plastic bottles
- Not tested on animals

BIODEGRADABLE—

This term refers to the ability of an ingredient or whole product to break down and decompose in the natural environment through natural processes. It is significant if a manufacturer specifies or if the product is certified to break down within a specific time frame “as most substances will eventually biodegrade if given enough time and the right ecological conditions.”

-Everyday Cleaning Products, The Green Guide, <http://www.thegreenguide.com/gg/pdf/ggCleanProd.pdf>

“Productivity improvements are driven primarily by health; [if workers] are absent due to illness—or if they are on-the-job but sick—productivity will drop.”

-Gregory Kats of Capital E; Environmental Building News, Oct 2004.

Ecover®:

www.ecover.com

Started in 1980 in Belgium, this international company specializes in ecological cleaners. They are the world’s largest competitor in the production of eco-friendly products and have won multiple international awards and recognitions for their work.

Ecover® practices rigorous environmental policies not only in the manufacturing of their products but also as an integral part of their business operations. They also run their venture out of one of the world’s first ecological factories and under a 10,800 ft² green roof.

Products include all-purpose, bathroom tile and surface cleaners, toilet bowl, floor, and glass cleaners.

- No VOCs or any known carcinogenic
- 100% biodegradable and plant based ingredients
- ISO-14001 certified⁶
- Concentrated formulas to reduce packaging and waste
- Recyclable packaging
- Not animal tested
- Minimal impact on aquatic life

Emerald Earth™ by UZ Engineered Products®:

www.uzengprod.com

This group specializes in industrial and institutional cleaners that are environmentally friendly and safe for your indoor air quality. Products include all-purpose cleaners, no pane glass cleaners, and a series of degreasers, sold in larger bottles for bulk use. Offering products specifically for use by office janitorial teams, this company works to exceed environmental standards on safety and effective cleaners.

- No petroleum-based solvents or ammonia
- Little or no VOCs
- Biodegradable ingredients
- Concentrated formulas to reduce packaging and waste
- Recyclable packaging
- Green Seal™ Certified
- ISO-14001 Certified

NON-TOXIC—

Although there is no true definition of ‘non-toxic’ presented to us by government standards, it can roughly be defined as an element that is not poisonous, harmful, or otherwise destructive to an organism upon exposure. “Unless a third party has verified this claim, it is considered meaningless.”

-Everyday Cleaning Products, The Green Guide, <http://www.thegreenguide.com/gg/pdf/ggCleanProd.pdf>