Custodial Operations’ Green Initiative

All about “Green”  

What is a Green product?  What is Green Cleaning?

A Green or environmentally preferable product is defined as a “product or service that has a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose” according to Presidential Executive Order 13101.

Green Cleaning would use green products to go even further. Green Cleaning would be the entire program that evaluates the individual building to include: its occupants and how the building is used; how the building is cleaned to include its cleaning chemicals, paper goods, equipment, procedures, and training.

Custodial Operations is one of the most environmentally responsible departments within the university. We began our journey and conversion in 2009 and we continue to expand the “green” microscope. The majority of our daily use chemicals went “green” over seven years ago to include banning aerosols. The management team as a whole is committed to finding safer methods and products for our students, staff, visitors and the sensitive natural environment we are fortunate to be located in.

Examples include:

- Reducing the number of chemicals, we use from over 200 to 70 in 2009 and from 70 to a total of 35 in 2017 which include: 9 out of 18 Green/EPA certified chemicals, 4 used exclusively at the President’s residence, and 13 used exclusively at our Workshop;
- Changed our requirements for all bag liners to low density;
- Moved to large, continuous rolls for paper products that are made from recycled paper including the cardboard boxes they are shipped and packaged in;
- Replacement program for all walk-off mats uses only recycled, lifetime guaranteed products
- Moved from cotton to microfiber (mops, towels, sponges, etc.) which last longer and significantly reduce waste;
- All of our air fresheners work off of simple air flow rather than using batteries or electricity.
- Changed all liquid soap dispensers to foam which last much longer; and
- Changed entire line of chemicals to one, green line for the majority of our daily use products to include our laundry detergent.

We continue to “save the environment” by insisting on a minimum of HEPA filtration where appropriate, low sound decibels, overall safe, effective and affordable supplies and equipment. We no longer use propane burnishers that produce carbon dioxide. Overall, all products and equipment are analyzed carefully by our Management Team for the following as well as testing each in the field prior to purchase.

- Green Certified and/or EPA certified
- Sustainability (recycled or long-lasting preventing replacement which lessen environmental footprint; permanent process reducing need for chemical usage; etc.)
- Indoor Air Quality
- Less than or equal to OSHA sound requirements for equipment

Many of our processes have been analyzed/trended and improved via our Strategic Planning process. After researching our Retention guidelines, we were able to move the majority of our paper forms and record keeping to an on-line system. This not only reduced our paper usage and storage but eliminated waste when items are updated and provided 24 hour accessibility to all shifts. We list the SDS (Safety Data Sheets) on the web page accessible to all indicating which products are green and/or EPA registered (a product cannot be both). We even provide a list of products available to our customers for their departmental use via our purchasing systems that are certified green. We do this for the obvious and so that what they may decide to use does not interact poorly with what we have used.

We take sustainability, the environment and our green initiative seriously.

*Custodial Operations’ mission is to promote innovative approaches, conscientious stewardship, and outstanding customer service while delivering clean and safe results to the University.*