ACTIVITY 1

A Green Cleaning Program

A green cleaning program works best when everyone on the cleaning team knows how to use the cleaning products and the equipment.

Training on how to use cleaning products correctly is important to protect the health and safety of housekeepers.

A Green Cleaning Program starts with smart cleaning methods:

- Having written procedures for cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting
- Following label directions
- Adding the amount of water listed on the product label to the concentrate
- Leaving the disinfectant solution glistening wet on the surface for the amount of time listed on the product label (contact time)
- Cleaning from the top down
- Spraying into a cloth instead of on the surface unless specified on the label to spray on the surface
- Using a stream rather than a mist when you are spraying a product
- Training on using personal protective equipment (PPE) like gloves and goggles
- Wearing gloves, goggles, aprons, respirators and other personal protective equipment when it is listed on the product label or SDS/Safety Data Sheet
Special equipment can help green cleaners work even better

Microfiber - Microfiber cloths and mops are made up of fibers that are smaller than a human hair so they can get into small cracks that cotton or paper towels can’t reach. They have an electrical charge that holds dirt, dust and germs in the cloth until they are washed. Microfiber mops are designed to reduce muscle and joint pain and injuries.

Microfiber cloths and mops can be used for the following cleaning tasks:
- Dusting
- Floor finishing
- Glass and stainless steel cleaning
- Removing germs
- Wet cleaning
- Wet mopping

Shine and Smell with Green Cleaning Products

Green cleaners are different from conventional cleaners. You may have noticed a difference in shine and smell when using green cleaning products.

Shine
Shiny floors seem to tell us that they have been cleaned and cared for. Floors cleaned with green products may not have a high shine but the surface is clean. After switching to a green cleaning program, clean floors may not be shiny. The ingredients in conventional cleaners that made the floors shine are not used in green cleaners. The ingredients don’t help the product clean and they can be bad for human health and the environment.
Smell

We are used to smells like bleach, pine, and lemon in cleaning products to tell us that an area has been cleaned. These smells come from chemicals that do not help cleaning. Here are some tips about smells.

• The best way to clean is to get rid of bad smells (urine, germs) without adding new chemical smells. Fragrance added to cleaners and deodorizers that plug-in to walls can contain chemicals that may irritate our breathing and may be harmful to our health. These chemicals often do nothing to clean.

• Many people link the smell of bleach with clean because bleach kills germs. But bleach can irritate breathing, cause asthma or asthma episodes. There are other ways to get rid of germs without using a chemical that can hurt your breathing.

• Microfiber - Microfiber cloths and mops are made up of fibers that are smaller than a human hair so they can get into small cracks that cotton or paper towels can’t reach. They have an electrical charge that holds dirt, dust and germs in the cloth until they are washed. Microfiber mops are designed to reduce muscle and joint pain and injuries.

Click all items that are part of a green cleaning program.

☐ Fragrance free
☐ Pine scent
☐ Lemon scent
☐ High shine
☐ Spray and wipe
☐ Let sit the recommended time
☐ Microfiber mop
☐ Cotton dust cloth
ACTIVITY 2
Germinator: Part 1

When do you clean? When do you sanitize? When do you disinfect?

We use cleaners, sanitizers and disinfectants for different tasks. Green cleaning programs choose the least hazardous chemical that will get the job done.

This is how the U S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention explains the difference among cleaners, sanitizers, and disinfectants:

- “Cleaners or detergents are products that are used to remove soil, dirt, dust, organic matter, and germs (like bacteria, viruses, and fungi). Cleaners or detergents work by washing the surface to lift dirt and germs off surfaces so they can be rinsed away with water. The same thing happens when you wash your hands with soap and water or when you wash dishes.”
- “Sanitizers are used to reduce germs from surfaces but (do) not totally get rid of them. Sanitizers reduce the germs from surfaces to levels that (are) considered safe.”
- “Disinfectants are chemical products that destroy or inactivate germs and prevent them from growing. Disinfectants have no effect on dirt, soil, or dust.”

A green cleaner works well for most general cleaning jobs and is less hazardous than sanitizers and disinfectants. Public health laws tell us where to use sanitizers and disinfectants, so you need to use sanitizers and disinfectants for some tasks. For example, sanitizers are often used in food preparation areas in kitchens. Disinfectants are important to use in health care to reduce the spread of infection. The facilities department at your work will have a cleaning plan to tell you where you need to use sanitizers and disinfectants.
Read the definitions below. Click the correct word for each definition:

1. Reduces, but does not eliminate, surface germs to levels that are considered safe for public health. Required in some areas covered by law or regulation including child care areas, food service areas/kitchens.

   Cleaning ○  Sanitizing ○  Disinfecting ○

2. Destroys almost all germs on a surface that cause infections when used as the label directs. Used to protect from infectious disease. Should be used where required by law, high-risk areas, or in case of infectious disease.

   Cleaning ○  Sanitizing ○  Disinfecting ○

3. Physically removes dirt and germs using water, detergent and rubbing of the surface.

   Cleaning ○  Sanitizing ○  Disinfecting ○
Disinfectants and sanitizers are used in many cleaning programs. Disinfectants are usually the most hazardous chemicals that custodians use.

Disinfectants do not need to be used everywhere. An all-purpose green cleaner and microfiber cloth (without any disinfectants) can get rid of over 90% of germs.

Disinfectants and sanitizers should be used according to your cleaning plan and where required by regulation.

Read the information on disinfectants and high risk or high touch surfaces. Then, click on one of the answers to the following questions.

High Risk and High Touch

High Risk
High risk areas are places where there is a strong possibility of germs that cause infections. Disinfectants are used to reduce the spread of illness. These areas include patient rooms, nurses’ offices, and patient equipment. The product label on the disinfectant will say what germs the disinfectant will destroy (for example SARS-CoV-2 virus or tuberculosis).

High Touch
High touch areas are places where many people touch the surface. Disinfectants are also used on high touch areas. Your cleaning plan should tell you when and how often to use a disinfectant on a high touch surface. Items that people often touch include overbed tables, call bell cords or buttons, door handles, light switches, bed rails, chairs, doorknobs, push bars, railings etc. and other areas required by regulation.

Floors and other areas usually need to be cleaned but not disinfected (unless your cleaning plan says to disinfect to control infection).
Here are some tips on reducing the spread of infections and using disinfectants:

- Know your cleaning plan and where disinfecting must be used.
- Disinfect spots of blood, body fluids, sewage wastes and other body waste that spread disease.
- Reduce the use of disinfectants by:
  - Cleaning with an all-purpose cleaner before you disinfect. Disinfectants work better when you clean the area first to get rid of dirt and other hiding places for germs.
  - Using microfiber mops and cloths to clean.
  - Don’t move germs from one area that you have cleaned to the next. For example, if you use a microfiber mop, remove the used mop pad and put it in a bag to launder before moving to the next room or area. Put a clean mop pad on when you get to the next room or area.
  - Follow the label directions. If using a concentrate, make sure you mix the chemical with the right amount of water at the correct temperature. Disinfectants must be left wet on the surface for the right amount of time in order to kill germs. Wipe or rinse the surface if it says so on the label.
  - Know how to protect yourself. Bleach is good at killing germs but can also hurt your breathing and can combine with other chemicals like ammonia or “quats” to make a dangerous gas. Bleach is not used in green cleaning programs. "Quats" are linked to disrupting hormones. Active ingredients like accelerated hydrogen peroxide, citric acid, l-lactic acid, or ethanol are safer disinfectants.
• Learn about new technologies. New ways to disinfect may become available that use less hazardous chemicals. Equipment like steam machines and water-based devices can clean, sanitize and disinfect.

Now that you have read the information on disinfectants and high risk or high touch areas, it’s time to answer some questions. Click on the correct answer.

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<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is a keyboard high touch?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes ☐ No ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Would you disinfect a doorknob?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes ☐ No ☐</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Are places where blood or body fluids spilled high touch?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yes ☐ No ☐</td>
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ACTIVITY 3
411 on Product Labels: Part 1

Cleaning product labels have information on health hazards, how to use the product safely, and what PPEs to use. It is important to understand this information to protect your health and safety.

Read the labels on the cleaning products you brought to the training (or use a label from the trainer).

1. Does the label give information about health hazards?
   - Yes ○
   - No ○

2. Does the label tell you how to use the product safely?
   - Yes ○
   - No ○

3. Does the label tell you what personal protective equipment (PPE) to use?
   - Yes ○
   - No ○

4. Is this cleaning product certified by a third party?
   - Yes ○
   - No ○

Hint: do you see
ACTIVITY 3
411 on Product Labels: Part 2

Using Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)

1. OSHA requires your employer to have a SDS for every hazardous chemical that you work with.
2. SDSs have information on:
   - Hazardous chemicals in the product and the common chemical names
   - Health effects
   - Exposure limits
   - Whether the chemical is considered to cause cancer
   - Precautionary measures
   - Emergency and first-aid procedures
   - The organization that prepared the SDS
3. To use an SDS effectively, it is important that your employer train you. It is also the law. The employer must train you on all the chemicals you work with. If you have to wear a respirator, or other personal protective equipment (PPE), you have to be trained to use the PPE the correct way.
4. Housekeepers should review the SDSs before using the product. Ask for help or more information from Environmental Health and Safety.
5. Part of your “right-to-know” is to have a SDS for each product that contains hazardous chemicals on file in your work area where you can get them.

Now that you have read the fact sheet about SDS:

Do you know where the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are located in your workplace?

Yes ☐  No ☐
REFERENCES

- University of Connecticut Health Center, Division of Occupational and Environmental Medicine - Green Cleaning Project
  https://health.uconn.edu/occupational-environmental/consultation-and-outreach/green-cleaning-project/
- Environmental Protection Agency, Identifying Greener Cleaning Products
  https://www.epa.gov/greenerproducts/identifying-greener-cleaning-products
- Informed Green Solutions Fact Sheets
  www.informedgreensolutions.org
- OSHA/NIOSH Infosheet, Protecting Workers Who Use Cleaning Chemicals