



GS-42 Green Seal™ Environmental Leadership Standard for Commercial Cleaning Services

Why the standard was created

The cleaning industry is experiencing a revolution. Green cleaning — high performance cleaning without health or environmental damage — is in demand. Facilities managers with green purchasing guidelines, managers of LEED certified buildings, government & university directors needing to meet green mandates and school purchasers needing to protect the health of their students are all looking to meet the need. Green Seal has strived to make the cleaning industry more sustainable since 1989. With GS-42 we give purchasers a way to identify green cleaning service providers and service providers specifications to follow. The stringent criteria, created with the involvement of stakeholders from industry and the public sector, will provide for leadership among cleaning services.

The scope of GS-42

The standard establishes requirements for cleaning service providers, including in-house and external cleaning services. Green cleaning encompasses all indoor activities typically required to clean commercial, public, and industrial buildings. Residential cleaning is not covered in this standard, but by Green Seal's GS-49.

Key Areas of Standard

The specific criteria in this standard cover planning, products, supplies, equipment, procedures, training, communications and labeling.

Planning Requirements

- Develop and maintain a set of written standard operating procedures to be available to all cleaning personnel and clients
- Have a building-specific green cleaning plan in place: communications and feedback, schedules, specifics on floor maintenance, high-traffic areas, vulnerable populations, special areas, IPM, etc.
- Have a plan for use and quarterly maintenance of powered equipment, as well as a plan for phasing out equipment that doesn't meet the standard's criteria

Products, Supplies, and Equipment Requirements

- For major specified categories, use only environmentally preferable products certified by an eco-label or designated by a national program

- New powered cleaning equipment must meet criteria in the standard, and those that doesn't must be phased out

Cleaning Procedure Requirements (sample)

- **Chemicals:** Use efficiently to limit waste and exposure
- **Solid waste:** Reduce by minimizing packaging, reusing supplies and recycling
- **Entryways:** Criteria for walk-off matting and frequent cleaning
- **Floor care:** Follow specifics for routine and restorative maintenance of floors and carpet
- **Disinfection:** Use EPA-registered disinfectants only where needed and as directed
- **Restrooms:** Clean and disinfect; do not mingle equipment with other areas
- **Dining areas and break rooms:** Clean and sanitize surfaces daily

ENVIRONMENTAL
LEADERSHIP STANDARDS



CERTIFICATION FOR
PRODUCTS, SERVICES,
PROPERTIES & COMPANIES



PARTNERSHIPS IN
GREEN PURCHASING &
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT



SUSTAINABILITY
RESEARCH & LIFE CYCLE
ANALYSIS



- **Trash and Recycling:** Inspect and pull as needed, work with management to support their program
- **Indoor plants:** Collect debris; keep away from carpet and vents
- **Vulnerable populations:** Reduce exposure to and use of chemicals

Communication Requirements

- Develop plan in conjunction with owners, managers, occupants to ensure good communication with cleaning personnel and facility managers
- Through this plan, the cleaning service shall:
 - provide staff training and two-way communication
 - facilitate reduction in cleaning and treatment (e.g., spill reporting procedures)
 - notify managers of cleaning products used, make a list of all chemicals, provide material safety data sheets and list a contact person for building
 - communicate with manager about special needs of occupants and have a mitigation plan

Training Requirements

- All cleaning personnel must have 12 hours training upon hiring regarding proper use, handling, and procedures before cleaning independently
- Site-specific training covering facility green

- cleaning plan, tailored procedures and hazards
- All cleaning personnel must have 24 hours of continuing training annually
- Records of training must be maintained

Certification Process

- Fill out the Preliminary Application at www.greenseal.org
- Green Seal staff will solicit data on company size, number of green-cleaned accounts or facilities
- Certification and annual monitoring fees are based on annual revenue of company, number of accounts cleaned and other factors
- Green Seal will evaluate standard operating procedures, records, etc., and audit a certain number of accounts or facilities, based on total
- Upon certification the cleaning service provider will be licensed to use the Green Seal Certification Mark to promote green-cleaned buildings

Labeling Requirements

- Certification applies to the specific cleaning service, and the Green Seal certification mark may be used in advertising that service
- Facilities cleaned by certified service may be so designated:

“This facility is cleaned by a service that meets the criteria of Green Seal’s Environmental Standard for Cleaning Services for reduced toxicity, waste, and exposure.”

Why Go Green in Your Facility?

Green Cleaning Helps Occupants Stay Healthy

- Clear link shown between poor indoor air quality and poor worker performance
- Many respiratory illnesses are caused by or aggravated by polluted indoor air

Green Cleaning Protects the Health of Custodial Staff

- Training staff in usage of safer products helps reduce injuries, decrease Workers’ Compensation claims and lower insurance costs

Green Cleaning Increases the Lifespan of Facilities

- Proper maintenance extends the longevity and performance of building materials and furnishings

Green Cleaning Preserves the Environment

- The cleaning industry currently consumes six billion pounds of chemicals
- Buying recycled paper and plastic products helps conserve natural resources

For more information, visit: www.greenseal.org, email: greenseal@greenseal.org or call (202) 872-6400