# Facility Cleaning & Maintenance in Schools: A Resource for Facility Managers

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*There has been a shift in the focus of cleaning — from cleaning for appearance to cleaning for health. A clean environment is an important component of health. Going green involves making changes or improvements to the facility that help create safer, healthier and more effective learning environments, while reducing the environmental impact of the facility.*

Consider the following factors when you are selecting products for engineering controls:

- Initial cost and estimated lifespan of the product.
- Degree of hazard reduction.
- Maintenance and care issues associated with product use.
- Improved efficiencies.

Energy STAR Rating and Available Products

- Energy STAR ratings indicate energy use of the product.
- Energy STAR rating was developed by the EPA to identify products that meet certain energy efficiency standards. Learn more: https://www.energystar.gov/products
- These energy STAR ratings apply to:
  - Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) systems, fixtures, lights, computers, printers, copiers, kitchen appliances and audio/visual equipment.
  - Equipment associated with custodial care and maintenance practices, including vacuums equipped with HEPA filtration, floor scrubbers, etc.

Routine Maintenance

- Annual HVAC system service
  - Routine pleated filter changes – The Association Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) recommends quarterly filter changes. However, in schools, it occurs 2 to 3 times per year to align with the school district calendar.
  - Evaluate system for effective drainage and presence of fungal (mold) contamination in the drip pans.
  - Check operation, tune-up system and clean out units.
- Annual combustion appliance service to ensure
  - Efficient combustion.
  - Proper exhausting of combustion contaminants.
- Hard and smooth surface flooring care

- Annual stripping and waxing of floors.

- Carpet care
  - Annual steam cleaning and daily vacuuming with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter-equipped vacuum.

Cleaning

- Custodial staff play a hugely important role in maintaining safe and healthy conditions within schools.
- Green (environmentally-friendly) cleaning helps minimize student and staff exposure to potentially hazardous cleaning chemicals.
- Green cleaning chemicals are generally produced using plant-based alternatives, rather than standard products. More commonly used products contain chemicals that can cause harm to both the environment and human health. Both DESE and the EPA provide additional guidance.
- Bleach can be used for disinfecting but must be properly diluted and staff should be trained in proper handling and application. The state provides references including guidance on preventing the spread of communicable diseases and laws for schools.

For additional tips on environmental health and safety in schools, visit PEHSU.Net. You can also explore more fact sheets to help you create a safer school environment for students, teachers and everyone in the school.

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