

The Ten Essential Things You Need To Create A Healthy Building

You may have read some things about and gathered some ideas about what green cleaning is and what it can do to help you create a healthy environment in your business and the people working with you. This report will help you on your path to creating a healthy building for your employees while helping the environment.

The goal of green cleaning, according to Stephen Ashkin, Author of *Green Cleaning for Dummies*, is to reduce health and environmental impacts. This means that green isn't simply an environmental issue but relates to human health as well. It also means that simply changing a product to be safer to use without considering the environmental impact (or vice versa) is not a green decision. You must consider both factors at the same time.

We don't suggest that current products, processes, or procedures are bad. We do maintain that newer technologies and processes make it possible to clean effectively. To be clear, green cleaning is more than switching a few products; it's about effective cleaning to create healthier buildings and at the same time reduce environmental impacts.

The Ten Essentials for Green Cleaning are:

1. **Stewardship** – a green cleaning program starts with understanding stewardship. Caring for the building and the people who use it, and the environment is an act of *stewardship*.
2. **Entryways** – you must stop the dirt where it enters the building. Inside and outside matting are very important. The mats help keep a significant amount of dirt from entering the building in the first place. Install walk-off mats, which will help to trap and remove the dirt before it enters the building. Proper and frequent cleaning of the mats is critical if you want them to keep grabbing dirt before it gets in.
3. **Spray Cleaners** – minimize airborne chemicals by replacing aerosols with trigger sprayers and setting them for a coarse spray pattern. Spray the cleaning cloth rather than the surface to be cleaned. Consider using microfiber clothes to reduce or eliminate the need for general purpose cleaners.
4. **Dust** – capture dust and microscopic particles rather than putting them back into the air. Replace traditional dust mops with microfiber dust mops or use vacuum cleaners to dry-clean hard floors. Use high-efficiency vacuum cleaners and vacuum cleaner filters and bags. Use microfiber clothes to capture dust rather than rags and furniture polish.
5. **Touchpoints** – focus on touchpoints, those spots where people come into contact with the facility's fixtures. Door handles, push bars, light switches, public phones, elevator buttons, and so on are prime points for disease transmission.
6. **Disinfect** – choose and apply disinfectants properly. Resist the temptation to overuse disinfectants. Good basic cleaning procedures are as effective as disinfectants for cleaning most surfaces. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for precleaning, dilution, and dwell time when using disinfectants.
7. **Good Cleaning products** – use Green Seal, Environmental Choice, or other green-standard setting organizations' approved cleaning chemicals whenever possible. For product categories not covered by existing standards, choose products that are lower in VOCs compared to similar products. Install and use chemical-dilution systems and

proportioning equipment to reduce chemical exposures to cleaning workers and building occupants.

8. **Paper Products** – look for janitorial paper products that have a significant percentage of post-consumer recycling content. Look for paper that was produced without using chlorine, which when released into the environment, can create dioxins and other incredibly dangerous chemicals. Get creative and use tree-free paper made from rapidly renewable sources like eucalyptus or bamboo. You can also consider using certified products.
9. **Recycling** – implement a buildingwide recycling program and involve all building occupants-failing to do so is a certain kiss of death for your program, which relies on every person to remember why, how and where to recycle that no-longer-needed sheet of paper, can or bottle.
10. **Safety** – ensure worker and occupant safety at all times. Use proper personal protection equipment, post wet floor signs and notices for any major work being done in the building, implement effective training programs, and provide resources for occupants education and program updates.