



## “Green” Does Not Mean They Are All the Same

As everyone knows, many end users are going Green. In the past couple of years it has likely become the major trend in the professional cleaning industry.

However, there is more to going Green than many end customers, as well as those of us in the professional cleaning industry, may realize. The following information might prove helpful when selecting most specifically cleaning chemicals, solutions, and detergents that are environmentally preferable.

### AREN'T THEY ALL THE SAME?

Many end users assume that just because a cleaning chemical has been Green certified—meaning that it has met specific requirements and a variety of standards and criteria—it will perform similarly to other Green cleaning chemicals used for the same purpose but produced by other manufacturers. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The purpose of the certification process is to ensure, among other things, that the ingredients used to develop, manufacture, and package the chemicals have a reduced impact on the environment and are more sustainable than conventional alternatives. Although performance is evaluated to see if the product does indeed work as intended, it is not compared to other Green chemicals used for the same purpose nor is the performance of the product rated or documented.

Another concern, which may become a larger problem in the future, is that the standards used by the different certification organizations can vary, and in some cases, quite extensively. This means that not only might the products not perform the same, they may not even be certified by other certification organizations as Green.

### HERE COMES THE HOMEWORK

This means that users and end customers must do their homework. As far as Green certification, work with organizations that are long recognized as respected leaders in this field.

As to performance, end customers are advised to work with their janitor distributors, testing a variety of cleaning chemicals and solutions produced by different manufacturers. And it is important that the tests be conducted in the customer's facility, not in a showroom. In one case, a facility manager tested 25 different floor finishes on one of his office floors before selecting products he believed worked satisfactorily.

And cost is another consideration, especially with today's tight economy. Green cleaning chemicals do tend to be highly concentrated, although that can vary. Based on the manufacturer's recommended dilution ratio, it is relatively easy to determine how far a certain cleaning chemical will go and, based on this information, the cost of using the chemical. End users should be aware that some Green products are more highly concentrated than others and if it performs well, may prove to be a cost saver as well.

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