



Greening Floor Care With Products and Equipment

Greening floorcare has been a bit more difficult than Greening other types of cleaning. The problem is in replicating many of the ingredients in conventional floorcare products using more environmentally preferable substitutes.

However, that does not mean we cannot Green floorcare. There are Green-certified floorcare cleaners, degreasers, and finishes available. Some users have found their performance and costs to be acceptable, while others . . . not so much.

In addition to using certified cleaners, end users can select products that have less impact on the environment by choosing floorcare chemicals with these characteristics:

- A pH no higher than 11.5

- Phosphorous concentrations of less than 0.5 percent

- A flash point* above 150 degrees Fahrenheit

- Less than 7 percent volatile organic compounds

- No known carcinogens, metals, or aqueous ammonia

Additionally, the type of equipment can play a major role in reducing the environmental impact of floorcare. Keep the following in mind when selecting floor equipment:

Machines with brushes that scrub deeper remove grit and soils using less water and chemical. Rotary machines can prove effective when performing many floorcare tasks; however, floor machines that use brushes, such as cylindrical brush technology, have greater contact pressure on floors and can dig deeper into tile and grout areas.

Some new floor scrubbers are designed to more precisely use chemicals and have an electronic solenoid to prevent accidental solution flow when the machine is not in use. Both help save chemical and water and help protect the environment.

Potentially harmful contaminants on the floor can be released into the air with burnishing, posing a potential health risk. To correct this problem, more advanced burnishers have deck shrouds to trap contaminants as the machine is used and high-filtration vacuum systems to capture them.

A final tip has nothing to do with chemicals or equipment. Part of the Greening of any facility, including Greening floorcare, is to make sure cleaning workers are onboard by explaining why Green practices and systems are being adopted—to help protect the environment and the health and safety of the cleaning worker as well.

* Flashpoint refers to the point at which a chemical will become combustible

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