

## GREEN CLEANING AT UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

Today, most institutions of higher education are turning to more environmentally preferable “Green Cleaning” methods for maintaining their facilities. These include Harvard, Oregon State, and Emory University. Environmentally preferable: (There is no universally agreed upon definition for Green) as defined by Executive Order 13101: **“...products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.** This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product or service” (3M). Green cleaning is more than just products. It includes many facets such as recycling solid waste, powered equipment use, and training

Although there is no one standard for Green Cleaning, there are several organizations that provide council and certifications denoting that buildings and institutions are environmentally friendly. These include but are not limited to:

- **US Green Building Council (USGBC)** – their mission is “to promote buildings that are environmentally responsible, profitable, and healthy places to live and work.” The USGBC certifies green buildings through the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Rating System ([usgbc.com](http://usgbc.com)). .
- **Green Seal** is an “independent non-profit organization that provides objective certification on a wide range of products and services based on environmental and human health criteria (Green Seal).
- **Environmental protection Agency** encourages partners to reformulate products to be environmentally safer, cost competitive, and effective ([epa.gov](http://epa.gov)).

There are numerous benefits to implementing a green cleaning program. They include:

- Reducing the health and environmental impact of cleaning
- Improved the health of the cleaning staff and building occupants
- Reduced liability
- Increased productivity
- Less tenant turnover

### What we are doing at Utah State University

At Utah State University, the facilities maintenance department is continually striving to become more environmentally friendly in both product usage and processes. There are several processes that are currently in place. They include:

- Recycling. Last year, USU recycled 700 tons of 20 different types of materials at its onsite recycling center. Seventy percent of the recycled material consisted of paper products and cardboard.
- Green Seal chemicals. Wherever possible, facilities maintenance uses Green Seal approved chemicals. Out of the chemicals we use on a daily basis, fifty percent are Green Seal approved.
- Consumables. We are now exploring environmentally friendly consumables. Right now, USU is converting to a foamy hand soap that creates less waste. We have also converted our paper towels to a product that consists of forty percent recycled materials.
- Training. There is a training team that meets on a biweekly basis and their charge is to effectively train facilities maintenance employees in the proper use of chemicals and processes to better ensure maximum efficiency and reduced waste.
- Quality improvement. Our quality improvement team is charged with improving the materials and processes we use. Through their efforts, we have become more environmentally friendly by incorporating more Green Seal chemicals and equipment. This team continues to explore new techniques and products to lessen USU's environmental impact.

As we move into the future, USU Facilities has made significant strides in becoming more environmentally preferable institution and will continue to seek new ways to become more environmentally preferable in the future.

*Sources:*

*Racquel Riddle; 3M Company; [www.mmm.com](http://www.mmm.com)*

*USGB; [www.usgbc.com](http://www.usgbc.com)*

*Green Seal; [www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)*

*Environmental Protection Agency; [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)*

*Travis Blanchard; Hanson Janitorial; Pocatello, ID*

*Craig Scott; Bell Janitorial Supply; Ogden UT*