



THE ORIGINAL GREEN  
SEAL OF APPROVAL  
SINCE 1989

# GS-37 Green Seal™ Standard for Cleaning Products for Industrial & Institutional

## *A Guide to Leadership in I&I Cleaning Products*

Cleaning products are vital for a healthy and aesthetically pleasing indoor environment but may harm human and environmental health. Many chemicals found in these products can be hazardous to human and aquatic life, and both manufacturers and users may be exposed to harmful chemicals.

These products often contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which are chemicals that can have short and long-term health effects and contribute to the formation of ground-level ozone pollution.

Green Seal offers the GS-37 Standard as a comprehensive benchmark for sustainable cleaning products for industrial and institutional use, and identifying products that are sustainability leaders in the industry.



### **Scope of Standard**

This standard establishes requirements for industrial and institutional general-purpose restroom, glass, and carpet cleaning products, including those that contain enzymes or microorganisms.

### **Key Areas Addressed**

GS-37 protects water and air quality, human health, and the environment by requiring products to be sold in concentrated form\*, prohibiting harmful chemicals, specifying sustainable packaging, and limiting VOC content. These criteria are intended to protect the health of building occupants and those using the product, as well as lower the impact of the product on the environment.

The requirements in the standard cover:

- Product Performance
- Human Health Protection
- Environmental Protection
- Packaging
- Training
- Labeling

### **Product Performance**

Certified cleaning products must demonstrate effective performance, comparable to that of nationally-recognized products in their categories. These products effectively clean common soils and surfaces when used as directed. The performance is measured using industry-standard test methods.

SUSTAINABILITY  
LEADERSHIP STANDARDS



INDEPENDENT  
THIRD-PARTY  
CERTIFICATION



SUSTAINABILITY  
RESEARCH &  
LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
FOR INSTITUTIONAL  
GREENING



## ***Human Health and Environmental Protection***

GS-37 enhances the safety of cleaning products by requiring them to be non-toxic and non-irritating to skin and eyes. Products cannot be formulated with harmful chemicals from a comprehensive list, which includes heavy metals, phthalates, formaldehyde donors, carcinogens, mutagens, reproductive toxins, asthmagens, and ozone depleting compounds.

Water quality is protected by setting limits on phosphorus content (to prevent eutrophication), and environmental toxicity and bioaccumulation (to prevent harmful chemicals accumulating in the waterways). The content of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) is limited in order to prevent ground level ozone air pollution and to protect the health of users. The standard also sets requirements for products that contain microorganisms and enzymes, addressing concerns about biosafety, purity, and genetically modified microorganisms.

## ***Concentration and Compaction***

Most certified cleaning products are sold in concentrated or ultra-concentrated form\*. This requirement reduces the volume of product sold, thereby minimizing packaging and transportation requirements, which leads to fewer trucks on the road, savings in fuel, and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. Less packaging saves raw materials and reduces the waste stream.

## ***Packaging Requirements***

Packaging from cleaning products can contribute significantly to the volume of solid waste, depletion of non-renewable resources, and water and air pollution.

The certified cleaners primary package must contain at least 20% less material than an equivalent package; be recyclable and contain 25% post-consumer material, or be a refillable package with an effective take-back program. Harmful compounds, such as phthalates, bisphenol A, and chlorinated packaging material must not be added intentionally.

## ***Training and Labeling Requirements***

Specific training or training materials on the proper use of the product must be offered. Both product labeling and training materials must contain clear instructions for use, dilution, refilling, disposal, recycling, and appropriate precautions and recommendations for the use of personal protective equipment. The product label shall include English and another language, or English and a graphical representation or icons.

\*Exceptions to the concentration requirement include toilet bowl/urinal cleaners, dry/absorbent compound carpet cleaners, and products solely labeled as carpet spot removers.

**This is only a summary of the standard.**

**The full standard is available for free download at [GreenSeal.org/GS37](http://GreenSeal.org/GS37)**

For more information visit: [www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org), call: 202.872.6400 or email: [greenseal@greenseal.org](mailto:greenseal@greenseal.org)

*Green Seal is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to safeguarding the environment and transforming the marketplace by promoting the manufacture, purchase, and use of environmentally responsible products and services. Founded in 1989, Green Seal provides life-cycle, science-based environmental certification standards that are credible, transparent, and essential to creating a more sustainable world.*