



**GREEN SEAL™ PROPOSED  
ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARD FOR  
RESIDENTIAL CLEANING SERVICES (GS-49)**

September 5, 2008

THE MARK OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

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## **GREEN SEAL™**

Green Seal is a non-profit organization devoted to environmental standard setting, product certification, and public education. Green Seal's mission is to work towards environmental sustainability by identifying and promoting environmentally responsible products, purchasing, and production. Through its standard setting, certification and education programs, Green Seal:

- identifies products that are designed and manufactured in an environmentally responsible manner;
- offers scientific analyses to help consumers make educated purchasing decisions regarding environmental impacts;
- ensures consumers that any product bearing the Green Seal Certification Mark has earned the right to use it; and
- encourages manufacturers to develop new products that are significantly less damaging to the environment than their predecessors.

The intent of Green Seal's environmental requirements is to reduce, to the extent technologically and economically feasible, the environmental impacts associated with the manufacture, use and disposal of products. Set on a category-by-category basis, Environmental Standards focus on significant opportunities to reduce a product's environmental impact.

Green Seal offers certification to all products covered by its Standards. Manufacturers may submit their products for evaluation by Green Seal. Those which comply with Green Seal's requirements may be authorized to use the Green Seal Certification Mark on products and in product advertising. Manufacturers authorized to use the Green Seal Certification Mark on their product are subject to an ongoing program of testing, inspection, and enforcement. For additional information on Green Seal or any of its programs, contact:

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## FOREWORD

**A. Certification.** This Environmental Standard contains the basic requirements for certain products (as defined in the Scope section below) to be certified by Green Seal™ and for their manufacturers to receive authorization to use the Green Seal Certification Mark on products and their packaging, and in product advertising. The requirements are based on an assessment of the environmental impacts of product manufacture, use, and disposal and reflect information and advice obtained from industry, trade associations, users, government officials, environmental and other public interest organizations, and others with relevant expertise. These requirements are subject to revision as further experience and investigation may show is necessary or desirable.

**B. Compliance with the Standard.** Compliance with this Standard is one of the conditions of certification of a product by Green Seal.

**C. Compliance with Government Rules.** In order to be authorized to use the Green Seal Certification Mark, the manufacturer of the certified product must disclose all governmental allegations or determinations of violation of federal, state, or local environmental laws or regulations with respect to facilities in which the product is manufactured. Certification will be denied any product manufactured in violation of environmental laws or regulations if, in Green Seal's judgment, such violations indicate that the environmental impacts of the product significantly exceed those contemplated in the setting of the standard.

**D. Limitations on Purpose of Standard.** Green Seal's Standards provide basic criteria to promote environmental quality. Provisions for product safety have not been included in this Standard because government agencies and other national standard-setting organizations establish and enforce safety requirements.

**E. Substantially Equivalent Products.** Products that are substantially similar to those covered by this standard in terms of function and environmental impact may be evaluated and certified by Green Seal against the intent of the requirements of this standard.

**F. Unanticipated Environmental Impacts.** A product which complies with this Standard will not necessarily be certified by Green Seal if, when examined and tested, it is found to have other features which significantly increase its impact on the environment. In such a situation, Green Seal will ordinarily amend its standards to account for the unanticipated environmental impacts.

**G. Certification Agreement and Green Seal Rules.** In order to be authorized to apply the Green Seal Certification Mark to a product or its packaging, or to use the Green Seal Certification Mark in product advertising, the manufacturer of the product must (1) undergo an initial product evaluation to determine that the product complies with Green Seal's requirements, (2) sign a Green Seal Certification Agreement that, among other things, defines how and where the Green Seal may be used, (3) pay fees to cover the costs of testing and monitoring, (4) agree to an ongoing program of factory inspections and product testing, and (5) comply with the requirements found in the most recent version of "Rules Governing the Use of the Green Seal Certification Mark."

**H. Disclaimer of Liability.** Green Seal™, in performing its functions in accordance with its objectives, does not assume or undertake to discharge any responsibility of the manufacturer or any other party. Green Seal shall not incur any obligations or liability for damages, including consequential damages, arising out of or in connection with the interpretation of, reliance upon, or any other use of this Standard.

**I. Care in Testing.** Many tests required by Green Seal's Standards involve safety considerations. Adequate safeguards for personnel and property should be employed in conducting such tests.

**J. Referenced Standards.** Standards referenced in this document may have been superseded by a later edition, and it is intended that the most recent edition of all referenced standards be used in determining compliance of a product with this standard.

**K. Labeling Requirements.** This standard neither modifies nor supersedes government labeling requirements. Labeling language which varies in form from the requirements of this section may be used with the written approval of Green Seal.

## List of Acronyms and Terms

**CFC.** Chlorofluorocarbon

**CFR.** Code of Federal Regulations

**CRI.** Carpet and Rug Institute

**dBa.** Decibels

**EPA.** United States Environmental Protection Agency

**GHS.** Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals

**ISO.** International Organization for Standardization

**IARC.** International Agency for Research on Cancer

**IRIS.** Integrated Risk Information System

**MSDS.** Material Safety Data Sheet

**NTP.** National Toxicology Program

**OSHA.** Occupational Safety and Health Administration

**VOC.** Volatile Organic Compound

## **GREEN SEAL™ PROPOSED ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARD FOR RESIDENTIAL CLEANING SERVICES (GS-49)**

### **1.0 SCOPE**

This standard establishes criteria for professional cleaning services for homes and residences. For the purposes of this standard, services that clean indoor residential facilities are included, such as services that clean residential kitchens and bathrooms, dusting, and floor cleaning. Single time or limited-services are not included such as carpet cleaning or mold removal services. Cleaning services for commercial or institutional buildings are not included in this standard.

### **2.0 DEFINITIONS**

**2.1 Carcinogens.** Chemicals listed as a known, probable, reasonably anticipated, or a possible human carcinogen by IARC (Groups 1, 2A, and 2B), NTP (Groups 1 and 2), EPA, IRIS (weight-of-evidence classifications A, B1, B2, C, carcinogenic, likely to be carcinogenic, and suggestive evidence of carcinogenicity or carcinogen potential), or OSHA.

**2.2 Cleaning Tools.** All powered and non-powered cleaning equipment and supplies used for cleaning kitchen, bathroom, dusting and floors that consume energy and or perform a function.

**2.3 Residential Cleaning Service Provider.** A professional cleaning business organization that provides cleaning services to residential facilities.

**2.4 Client.** The residential household or entity contracting for the professional services of a residential cleaning service provider.

**2.5 Disinfect.** A process for hard inanimate surfaces undertaken to destroy or irreversibly inactivate infectious fungi and bacteria, but not necessarily their spores. Disinfection is performed using only EPA-registered disinfectants or EPA-registered disinfection devices.

**2.6 Environmentally Preferable Product.** A product certified as such by a Type 1 (i.e., third-party) environmental label that was developed in accordance with the ISO 14024 Environmental Labeling Standard. Alternatively, a product may be designated as environmentally preferable by an established and legitimate, nationally-recognized program developed with the purpose of identifying environmentally preferable products. The program must not have any financial interest or stake in sales of the product, or other conflict of interest. Such designation must be based on consideration of human health and safety, ecological toxicity, other environmental impacts, and resource conservation, as

appropriate, for the product and its packaging, on a life cycle basis. Product criteria must distinguish market leadership for that product category, and be publicly available and transparent.

**2.7 Microfiber.** Products made from synthetic fibers that measure less than one denier. The most common types of microfibers are made from polyesters, polyamides (nylon), and or a conjugation of polyester and polyamide. Microfiber is used in the manufacture of non-woven, woven and knitted textiles. The shape, size and combinations of synthetic fibers are selected for specific characteristics, including: softness, durability, absorption, wicking abilities, water repellency, electrostatics, and filtering capabilities.

**2.8 Mutagen.** A chemical that meets the criteria for category 1, chemicals known to induce heritable mutations or to be regarded as if they induce heritable mutations in the germ cells of humans, under the GHS.

**2.9 Optical Brighteners.** Additives designed to enhance the appearance of colors and whiteness in materials by absorbing ultraviolet radiation and emitting blue radiation; including but not limited to fluorescent whitening agents.

**2.10 Ozone-Depleting Compounds.** Any compound with an ozone-depletion potential greater than 0.01 (CFC 11=1) according to the EPA list of Class I and Class II Ozone-Depleting Substances.

**2.11 Product.** A broad term covering both goods, which are physical objects, and services.

**2.12 Reproductive Toxin.** A chemical listed as a reproductive toxin (including developmental, female, and male toxins) by the State of California under the Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (California Code of Regulations, Title 22, Division 2, Subdivision 1, Chapter 3, Sections 1200, et. Seq., also known as Proposition 65).

**2.13 Residential Property.** Property which is zoned for single-family homes, multi-family apartments, townhouses, condominiums, and/or co-ops.

**2.14 Sanitize.** A process intended to reduce, but not necessarily eliminate, microorganisms from the inanimate environment to levels considered safe as determined by public health codes or regulations.

**2.15 Toxic.** A product is considered toxic if it falls under the labeling requirements as a toxic or highly toxic product, as defined by Consumer Product Safety Commission regulations found at 16 CFR Chapter II, Part 1500.

**2.16 Vulnerable Individual/Populations.** A vulnerable individual or populations represent people who are more susceptible than the general population to chemicals and products that might pose a risk to human health.

These populations include but are not limited to children, pregnant women, the elderly and infirm, people sensitive to chemical exposures (e.g., fragrances), and other occupants, customers, or employees that may have a higher susceptibility to cleaning operations.

**2.17 Volatile Organic Compound** A chemical with a vapor pressure greater than or equal to 0.1 mm Hg at standard conditions.

### **3.0 OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS**

**3.1 Standard Operating Procedures.** Residential cleaning service providers must have written guidelines that define the standard operating procedures. These guidelines shall be made available to all cleaning personnel and clients and shall include the following:

- Storage, handling, and use of chemicals.
- Procurement of environmentally preferable cleaning products.
- Environmentally preferred tools, cloths, mops and other equipment,.
- Inspection and maintenance program of all tools, supplies and equipment.
- Cleaning procedures
- Training and certification requirements of staff.
- Quality control assurance.
- Vulnerable population and accident management
- Waste and water use policies
- Safety procedures per/ in compliance with OSHA and state regulations.

#### **3.2 Cleaning Tools and Equipment.**

**3.2.1** Microfiber mop cloth and dusters shall be used for cleaning purposes.

**3.2.2** A color coded system for cleaning cloths, mops, and tools shall be in place in order to prevent cross contamination.

**3.2.3** Powered Equipment.

3.2.3.1 Residential cleaning service providers shall evaluate whether the cleaning equipment currently being used is functioning properly (as validated by equipment manufacturer or by reputable third party service organization) or that it is tagged out of service.

3.2.3.2 Residential cleaning service providers shall phase-out equipment that does not, at a minimum, meet the following specifications:

- Powered floor maintenance equipment, including vacuum cleaners, shall be equipped with controls or other devices for capturing and collecting particulates and shall operate at a sound level less than 70 dBA. Vacuum cleaners shall be equipped with the appropriate filter or bag and these shall be changed or cleaned as per the manufacturers recommendations. Precautions shall be taken to limit worker and vulnerable population exposure to dust and particulate matter when cleaning and replacing bags and filters.
- Vacuum cleaners must meet, at a minimum, the CRI Green Label Program requirements, or equivalent.

**3.2.4** Brooms, cloth, paper, and feather dusters shall not be used in performing any cleaning activity.

### **3.3 Cleaning Products and Supplies.**

#### **3.3.1 Environmentally Preferable Products.**

**3.3.1.1** The residential cleaning service provider shall use only environmentally preferable products for the following:

- General-purpose cleaners
- Floor cleaners
- Restroom cleaners
- Glass cleaners
- Floor finishes and floor strippers
- Soap
- Sanitary paper products: toilet tissue, facial tissue, paper towels, and napkins

**3.3.1.2** The residential cleaning service provider shall only use the following:

- Plastic trash can liners, that contain a minimum of 10% post-consumer recycled content
- Oven cleaning products that are not toxic in the undiluted form.

**3.3.1.3 Restricted Chemicals.** Products used by residential cleaning service providers not included in 3.3.1.1 shall not include the following:

- Alkylphenol ethoxylates and their derivatives
- Ethylene diaminetetraacetic acid or its derivative,
- Carcinogens
- Mutagens

- Reproductive toxins
- Cleaning products shall not contain more than 1 % reactive chlorine compounds or active chlorine carriers
- Formaldehyde donors
- 2-Butoxyethanol
- Phthalates
- Heavy metals, lead, hexavalent chromium, or selenium; either in the elemental form or compounds
- Ozone-depleting compounds
- Optical brighteners

### **3.4 Site-Specific Cleaning Procedure Requirements.**

#### **3.4.1 Bathrooms:**

- Perform bathroom cleaning from high to low, toward the doorway, with dry cleaning tasks performed prior to wet cleaning operations.
- Control and remove standing moisture from floor and bathroom surfaces in a timely manner.
- Perform disinfection in areas or on surfaces where pathogens can collect and breed such as in bathrooms and on bathroom faucets. Use disinfectants only where required. Perform disinfection using only EPA-registered disinfectants or EPA-registered disinfection devices.
- When using chemical disinfectants or cleaner/disinfectants, follow product label directions for preparation of disinfecting solutions (e.g., dilution rate), and the appropriate disinfecting and cleaning method for the area to be cleaned (e.g., dwell time and whether pre-cleaning is required).
- Use bathroom cleaning equipment specifically for restroom cleaning only. Bathroom cleaning tools and equipment, except powered equipment shall not be used to clean any other areas of the building.

#### **3.5.2 Floors.**

- Vacuum floors to remove particulate matter.
- Perform floor cleaning from high to low, toward the doorway, with dry cleaning tasks performed prior to wet cleaning operations.

#### **3.5.3 Kitchens.**

- Vacuum floors to remove particulates.
- Perform kitchen cleaning toward the doorway, with dry cleaning tasks performed prior to wet cleaning operations.
- Clean and sanitize all surfaces in the kitchen including cabinet, kitchen table and chairs and sinks.
- Clean all appliances in the kitchen.

**3.5 Vulnerable Populations.** The cleaning service provider shall identify whether a vulnerable individual resides in the facility being cleaned and if such an individual is present, all of the following shall be conducted:

- Adopt alternative cleaning practices that minimize or make unnecessary the use of cleaning chemicals.
- Use cleaning chemicals in areas only where sufficient ventilation is present to allow chemicals to dissipate before the area becomes repopulated. If available provide additional ventilation through the use of blowers to enhance the rate of chemical dissipation.
- Clean in a manner that prevents the transfer of impacts to other areas of the residential facility that may contain vulnerable populations.
- In cases when the vulnerable population involves those with a compromised immune system consult health professionals before undertaking the cleaning activity.

**3.6 Accident Management.** The cleaning service provider shall have an appropriate accident control policy governing the procedure to be followed in case of an accident. Accident report forms shall be kept on all cleaning crew and shall be readily accessible to all staff. A basic first aid kit shall be provided for each cleaning crew.

**3.7 Chemical Handling.** Residential cleaning services shall:

- Train all staff in the proper handling of chemicals, special considerations for any hazardous chemicals used, MSDS information and MSDS available, and the use of personal protective equipment,
- Provide chemical dispensing units to dispense chemicals at the proper dilution rate to minimize worker exposure,
- Provide appropriate applicators for all cleaning chemicals that do not result in over application of cleaning products.
- Provide instructions on cleaning, rinsing, re-use and recycling of used chemical applicators.

**3.8 Waste Requirements.** Residential cleaning service shall at a minimum:

- Purchase chemical products and other supplies in quantities that minimize the amount of packaging waste generated.

**3.9 Water Use.** A policy governing efficient use of water in cleaning operations shall be in place.

## **4.0 TRAINING REQUIREMENTS**

- 4.1** All owners, managers and employees shall receive 8 hours of continuing training and/or education on an annual basis to maintain knowledge of correct procedures for safety, tools, techniques, and procedures.

In addition, upon hiring, all cleaning personnel are required to undergo initial training on the company's standard operating procedures, the proper sequencing of cleaning steps, and the proper use of personal protective equipment, in addition to regulatory requirements. As part of initial training, all personnel are to be given standard safety training including focusing on reducing and preventing ergonomic injuries and exposure to hazardous materials encountered by cleaning service providers and their personnel. New hires should receive their initial training in the company office and then continued or advanced training may be conducted at the site, before personnel are assigned to clean independently.

The training of each employee must be documented in order to fulfill the staff training requirement.

## **5.0 CERTIFICATION AND LABELING REQUIREMENTS**

- 5.1** The Green Seal Certification Mark may appear in the advertising materials of a residential cleaning service provider with respect to the cleaning service certified under this Standard. The Green Seal Certification Mark shall not be used in conjunction with any modifying terms, phrases, or graphic images that might mislead consumers as to the extent or nature of the certification. All text and graphics using the Green Seal Certification Mark and Green Seal's name in advertising, brochures, reports, promotional or other materials shall be approved in writing by Green Seal.

- 5.2** Wherever the Green Seal Certification Mark appears, there must be a description of the basis for certification. The description shall be in a location, style, and typeface that are easily readable by the consumer. Unless otherwise approved in writing by Green Seal, the description shall read as follows:

"This cleaning service meets the criteria of Green Seal's Environmental Standard for Residential Cleaning Services for reduced toxicity, waste, and exposure."

For use at residence, unless otherwise approved in writing by Green Seal, the description shall read as follows:

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“This residence is cleaned by a service that meets the criteria of Green Seal's Environmental Standard for Residential Cleaning Services for reduced toxicity, waste, and exposure.”

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