



GS-42

The Facts Comparing Green Cleaning Services

This is one of a series of briefs comparing Green Seal™ standards or programs with similar programs in the marketplace. These briefs are provided in response to requests from clients, purchasers, and others seeking greater clarity in the marketplace amidst the growing number of ecolabels and environmental standards. While Green Seal strives to provide objective and factual information and comparisons, we realize that some may have different views, and we invite comments on this or other briefs to be sent to: green Seal@green Seal.org.

Sector of Marketplace Addressed

- Janitorial cleaning services for the industrial and institutional marketplace
- Both contract and in-house cleaning services
- Focus on the actual cleaning service provided, not the company providing it

Overview of GS-42 Standard

- Responds to demand for green cleaning by major facilities managers, government agencies, and private-sector standards such as LEED®
- Designed to identify leadership levels in cleaning services with respect to functional performance and environmental benefits
- Developed in an open and transparent process in conformance with ISO 14024
- Consensus achieved on final standard, issued in 2006
- Covers products, procedures, equipment, training, communications, building-specific plans
- Requires specific criteria to be achieved in each of these areas

Similar Standards/Programs

Examining two related programs: LEED EB: O&M and ISSA's CIMS

USGBC's LEED EB: O&M (LEED for Existing Buildings: Operations & Maintenance) is a standard designed for certifying the way buildings are built, designed and run. It is not a cleaning services standard, but includes green cleaning requirements. Having your building serviced by a Green Seal-certified cleaning service can qualify for five LEED points under the standard.

ISSA's CIMS (Cleaning Industry Management Standard) has focused on bringing a quality management approach to cleaning services. This can have the beneficial effect of upgrading the quality of the industry's practices. Recently, CIMS has proposed incorporating some environmental criteria very similar to LEED EB: O&M and GS-42, and intends to fulfill the janitorial credits of LEED EB: O&M

Comparing Programs

In deciding which program to pursue, it is important to consider these factors:

- **How was the standard developed?** Credible standards are developed in an open, transparent, and scientifically-based process. A balanced stakeholder group representing all interested parties must be involved.
- **Who developed the standard?** An independent party with no stake or conflict of interest in the final product results in the most balanced standards.
- **Who does the certification?** 3rd-party certification has been defined by a number of organizations internationally and domestically. Certification to a verifiable standard, with a process that includes a facility audit, results in a credible and meaningful award.

ENVIRONMENTAL
LEADERSHIP STANDARDS



CERTIFICATION FOR
PRODUCTS, SERVICES,
PROPERTIES & COMPANIES



PARTNERSHIPS IN
GREEN PURCHASING &
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT



SUSTAINABILITY
RESEARCH & LIFE CYCLE
ANALYSIS



Making Purchasing of Cleaning Products and Services Easier

Institutional Purchasers

According to the Responsible Purchasing Network, Green Seal's environmental standards were recognized by 90% of respondents and utilized in purchasing by 66% of responding organizations.¹ More than 60% of RPN's 211 member organizations responded to the survey.

State, City and County Purchasing

In April 2009, a cooperative procurement for Green Cleaning Products, Programs, Equipment and Supplies was issued by Connecticut, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York, and Massachusetts. The cleaning chemicals under the five-year contract are required to be certified by either Green Seal or EcoLogo. Other states with purchasing references to Green Seal include Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Washington. Many US cities and counties also specify Green Seal in procurement.

Green Cleaning in K-12 Schools

In June 2009, Connecticut passed a law requiring the use of certified products for use in "green" cleaning schools. Hawaii followed in July with a law that requires the use of Green Seal-certified cleaners in schools. In addition, Green Seal certification is included as part of the green cleaning in schools legislation/implementation in New York, Illinois, Maine, Maryland and Missouri.

Green Seal certification is also referenced by a number of school districts and nonprofit organizations such as the Healthy Schools Network, the Healthy Schools Campaign and the Green Flag Schools Program.

Green Cleaning in Higher Education, Healthcare and Institutions

The Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), with more than 700 college and university members, references Green Seal for both products and cleaning operations in their Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) for Colleges and Universities.

References to Green Seal's environmental standards can also be found in the Green Guide for Health Care, the US Green Building Council's LEED rating systems and the Green Building Initiative's Green Globes environmental assessment and rating tools.

***To find out more, call 202.872.6400,
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