



THE ORIGINAL GREEN
SEAL OF APPROVAL
SINCE 1989

GS-42

Green Seal™ Standard for Commercial and Institutional Cleaning

A Guide for Leadership in Commercial Cleaning

Green cleaning—high performance cleaning that protects human and environmental health—is in demand. The procedures, products, and training that services utilize can enhance our health and well-being if managed responsibly. Both in-house and contracted cleaning services can protect tenants, workers, and the environment by following the requirements in Green Seal's Standard for Commercial and Industrial Cleaning, GS- 42.



The Scope of GS-42

The standard establishes leadership environmental requirements for all activities that cleaning services typically perform when cleaning indoor areas and entryways of commercial, public and industrial buildings. The standard also covers the cleaning of hotels, hospitals, dormitories, and similar properties with residential and common areas, and the cleaning of common or public areas of apartment buildings and similar properties. GS-42 does not cover the maintenance of any exterior areas such as parking lots, grounds, or picnic areas; residential homes or areas, or specialty cleaning services.

Key Areas Addressed

GS-42 establishes criteria for the most important and impactful processes of cleaning services:

Cleaning Operations | Communication | Purchasing | Training | Labeling

Cleaning Operations Requirements (Summary)

- **Building-Specific Plans:** Have written standard operating procedures and schedules that are specific to each building
- **Floor care:** Follow specifics for routine and restorative maintenance of floors and carpet
- **Restrooms:** Clean and disinfect; do not mingle equipment with other areas
- **Dining areas and break rooms:** Clean and sanitize surfaces daily
- **Entryways:** Criteria included for walk-off matting and frequent cleaning
- **Disinfection:** Use EPA-registered disinfectants only where needed and as directed
- **Trash and Recycling:** Inspect and pull as needed, work with management to support their program
- **Vulnerable populations:** Identify vulnerable populations and develop plans that reduce their exposure to cleaning chemicals
- **Indoor plants:** Keep plants away from carpet and vents

Communication Requirements

Develop a plan to ensure good communication with cleaning personnel and facility managers.

- Provide feedback on issues such as pest control and construction and building improvements
- Make a list of all cleaning products used, provide material safety data sheets and provide a cleaning contact person for building
- Obtain from the manager any special needs of occupants and have a mitigation plan

Purchasing Requirements

- Purchase certified environmentally preferable products in the following categories:
 - General-purpose cleaners, floor cleaners, bathroom cleaners, glass cleaners, and carpet cleaners
 - Floor finishes and floor strippers
 - Liquid hand soap
 - Toilet tissue and facial tissue
 - Paper towels and napkins
- Establish criteria for new powered cleaning equipment:
 - Vacuum cleaners
 - Carpet extraction equipment

ENVIRONMENTAL
LEADERSHIP STANDARDS



CERTIFICATION FOR
PRODUCTS, SERVICES,
PROPERTIES & COMPANIES



PARTNERSHIPS IN
GREEN PURCHASING &
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT



SUSTAINABILITY
RESEARCH & LIFE CYCLE
ANALYSIS



Purchasing Requirements (cont.)

- Powered floor maintenance equipment
- Propane-powered floor equipment
- Powered scrubbing machines
- Purchase cleaning products and supplies in ways that minimize the amount of waste generated from packaging and containers.

Training Requirements

- New hires must have 12 hours training about proper procedures, handling, and product use before cleaning on their own. An additional 12 hours of training must be completed before the end of their first year.
- Site-specific training must describe the cleaning plan for the facility and any tailored procedures and hazards
- All cleaning personnel must have 24 hours of continuing training each year
- Records of training must be maintained

Labeling Requirements

The Green Seal Certification Mark may appear on the property of the certified service and promotional materials

only in conjunction with the certified service. The following text must accompany the Mark:

This cleaning service meets Green Seal™ Standard GS-42 based on waste minimization, building-specific operational procedures, effective custodial training and use of products with limits on human & environmental toxicity. GreenSeal.org.

Certification Process

- Fill out the Preliminary Application at www.greenseal.org
- Green Seal staff will solicit data on company size and number of green-cleaned accounts or facilities
- Green Seal will evaluate standard operating procedures, records, etc., and audit a certain number of accounts or facilities based on the total
- Upon certification the cleaning service provider will be licensed to use the Green Seal Certification Mark to promote their cleaning service
- Certification and annual monitoring fees are based on annual revenue of company, number of accounts cleaned, and other factors

Why Be an Environmental Leader?

Green Cleaning Helps Occupants Stay Healthy

- Green cleaning results in less missed work days and more productive environments
- Poor indoor air quality can negatively impact worker performance
- Polluted indoor air can contribute to or aggravate many respiratory illnesses

Green Cleaning Helps Protect the Health of Custodial Staff

- Training staff in the use of safer products helps reduce injuries, decrease Workers' Compensation claims, and lower insurance costs

Green Cleaning Increases the Lifespan of Facilities

- Proper maintenance extends the life and performance of building materials and furnishings

Green Cleaning Preserves the Environment

- Using less and safer chemicals protects air and water quality and aquatic life
- Buying recycled paper and plastic products helps conserve natural resources
- Maintaining equipment and using environmentally preferable products reduces waste

This document provides a summary of GS-42. The full standard is available for free viewing and downloading at GreenSeal.org/GS42

Green Seal, Inc. 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.

For more information, visit: greenseal.org, call: 202.872.6400, or email: greenseal@greenseal.org