



Green Ideas

## eSafetyLine Be a Greener Cleaner

Another area where a great deal of “greening” is happening is in the area of cleaning products. There are certain chemicals that are commonly used in household cleaners that present known or suspected health problems for humans and the environment once they wash down the drain.

Volatile Organic Compounds (or VOCs), like those found in many house paints, are added to cleaning products to enhance the product’s performance. A big problem is that there is little regulation of cleaning chemicals and there are really no labeling requirements that would let the consumer know what exactly is in the cleaner.

However there are things you can do at home to help protect your family, reduce your household’s toxic burden and help protect the environment:

- **Look Under Your Kitchen Sink**  
this is where most of us keep our kitchen cleaners. If we remove toxic products they can no longer be a danger to your family. Anything with the words *poison*, *danger*, *warning* or *caution* on the label should be removed from your home. Small amounts of the poisons can leak out of bottles and spray bottles and move around the kitchen.
- **Household Hazardous Waste Pickups**  
save up whatever toxic products found in your home and have them picked up by you municipality’s hazardous waste pickup. These chemicals shouldn’t be put down the drain nor thrown away with the regular trash; they can cause problems for the environment that way. Most communities have at least one such pickup per year.

- **Replace Toxic Products**

now that the bad stuff is gone replace them with non-toxic, biodegradable products. This switch will help to protect your family as well as the environment.

- **Learn Non-Toxic Cleaning Basics**

many commonly found items in your kitchen cupboards will do a good job at cleaning around the house. There are five basics that most everyone has in their house that can be used alone or to make safe cleaners: baking soda, washing soda, white vinegar and lemon juice, liquid soaps and detergents and mold killers and disinfectants. A very safe alternative to mold killers and disinfectants is the use of essential oils, such as lavender, clove, and tea tree oil (an excellent natural fungicide), that are very antiseptic, as is grapefruit seed extract. They also smell a lot better than the chemical alternative.

- **Learn About Your Water**

knowing basics like is your water hard or soft can help get a handle on how to best clean your home safely. If you have hard water a better choice would be to clean with a detergent instead of soap whereas with soft water soap will work well.

It would be an enormous task to completely “green” your home at one time.

However, if you take small steps at regular intervals the transition will be much easier and the end result a safer home.

### **Discussion Questions**

Under what conditions is using a detergent a better bet than soap?

Besides cleaning products, what other commonly used household product release VOCs?

# MEETING / TRAINING ATTENDANCE ROSTER

COMPANY: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY MEETING

JOB/DEPT: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ SAFETY TRAINING

DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

TOPICS ADDRESSED: \_\_\_\_\_

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## EMPLOYEE'S SIGNATURES

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EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: \_\_\_\_\_

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ACTION TAKEN: \_\_\_\_\_

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Supervisor's Signature

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Date

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Safety Coordinator's Signature

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Date