

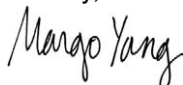
## Welcome to the first edition of EPA Healthy School NEWS!

Kids spend a lot of time in school, and they need a safe, healthy environment in which to learn. In this newsletter, we have a singular goal in mind: offer information that will keep schools environmentally healthy and pollution-free.

Children in pollution-free school environments learn and produce significantly better than in schools where there are indoor and outdoor environmental problems. Through articles, tips and links, we aim to assist facility managers, school leaders, teachers, and parents to recognize and address potential environmental health issues in their schools.

Please enjoy Healthy School NEWS and contact us with any questions or feedback.

Sincerely,



Margo Young, EPA Region 10  
Children's Health & Environmental Education  
[young.margo@epa.gov](mailto:young.margo@epa.gov) or 206-553-1287

## Prevent Child Injury & Costly Mercury Cleanups

Numerous mercury spills have occurred in schools over the past several years with cleanup costs ranging from \$20,000 to \$1.5 million. Mercury is a highly toxic substance—especially to children. Unfortunately, students frequently don't know the dangers of mercury and are intrigued by its silvery and slippery properties.

Locating and removing mercury from schools will help prevent health consequences as well as costly clean-ups.

Most mercury incidents stem from students who bring the substance into school or improper handling and storage by school personnel in classrooms or science labs. It is important to educate students and staff about the dangers and sources of mercury exposure.

Here's what you can do:

- Inventory buildings for mercury and mercury-containing items
- Increase awareness among students and staff
- Phase out all mercury containing devices
- Recycle mercury and mercury containing items



For assistance with removal and disposal, please contact your state environmental or health department, or contact Jack Boller, at 206-553-2953 or [oller.jack@epa.gov](mailto:oller.jack@epa.gov).

## In This Issue

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- New lead law takes effect April 2010
- National Healthy Schools Day
- Indoor air quality grants available soon
- Unplug and save \$
- Asbestos alert
- Indoor air quality award
- What's happening in your state

## Hot Topic

### New Lead Safety Law Means Schools Must Use Certified Firms and Workers

Starting April 22, 2010, individuals and firms hired to work on renovations, repairs, or painting in facilities that are "child-occupied" must be certified to use lead-safe work practices. The new federal regulation, called the Renovation, Repair, & Painting Rule (RRP), applies to pre-1978 facilities and to where children under age 6 are located.

The RRP rule applies to facilities where pre-K, kindergarten, or child-care services are being offered. To learn more about the RRP rule, go to EPA's lead website at [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead) or contact Wallace Reid, Lead Team Leader at 206-553-6389 or [reid.wallace@epa.gov](mailto:reid.wallace@epa.gov).



## Celebrate National Healthy Schools Day

Help your school celebrate on April 26th. The 2010 campaign focuses on using certified green cleaning products which help reduce pollutants from indoor air. Did you know:

- 25% of chemicals in the cleaning products used in schools are toxic and contribute to poor indoor air quality, smog, cancer, asthma, and other disease, and,
- that's more than 450 contaminants of air found in widely used products?

Source: *Healthy Schools Network, Inc.*

Watch these informational videos on safe and healthy school environments at: [www.sph.emory.edu/PEHSU/PEHSU\\_VideoPg/PEHSU\\_videopage.html](http://www.sph.emory.edu/PEHSU/PEHSU_VideoPg/PEHSU_videopage.html).

## Indoor Air Quality Grants – Available in March

Visit the website soon to apply for this funding program that provides indoor air quality project support for schools, buildings, and homes. Learn more at: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/AIRPAGE.NSF/webpage/Indoor+Air+Grants+Request+for+Proposals+in+EPA+Region+10>. Contact Davis Zhen at 206-553-7660 or [zhen.davis@epa.gov](mailto:zhen.davis@epa.gov) for more information.



## Unplug and Save

Lower your “plug load” and save money. “Plug loads” refers to the energy consumed by appliances and other devices that you plug into the wall. In a school, this includes computers, electric lights, printers, coffee machines and many others.

These devices continue to draw power even when they are turned “off” because they contain low voltage transformers. As an example, computers and monitors can drain as much as eight to ten watts of power even when powered down, and printers can be even worse. Think about the dozens of devices left on at night and on weekends. You could save a lot!

The best thing to do? Use the switch on a power stripe to turn them all off. Your school budget will show the savings over time. For more energy saving tips, please contact Jim Borthen at 206-553-1485 or [borthen.jim@epa.gov](mailto:borthen.jim@epa.gov)

## Heads Up: Inform Contractors About Asbestos in Advance

Asbestos remains a critical issue, especially for those who are responsible for school maintenance and repair of buildings that are older than 1978.

According to federal law, if a contractor is not informed about the presence of asbestos in a school where work is underway, the school district is liable for non-compliance with the law, and for potentially exposing the contractor, employees, teachers and school children to dangerous asbestos fibers. Newer schools still need to document whether asbestos is present or not.

EPA can help. Read about school district responsibilities related to asbestos at [www.epa.gov/asbestos](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos). For more information, you can contact Wallace Reid, R10 EPA Asbestos Team Leader at 206-553-6389 or [reid.wallace@epa.gov](mailto:reid.wallace@epa.gov)

## What’s Happening In Your State

### Idaho

Read about Clean Air Zone, Idaho’s statewide program to reduce children’s exposure to diesel/vehicle exhaust through anti-idling. Visit [http://www.deq.state.id.us/air/educ\\_tools/clean\\_air\\_zone\\_idaho/index.cfm](http://www.deq.state.id.us/air/educ_tools/clean_air_zone_idaho/index.cfm)

### Washington

Check out a new resource guide: Improving Indoor Air Quality in King County School at [www.govlink.org/hazwaste/publications/SCH\\_HEALTHY\\_2.pdf](http://www.govlink.org/hazwaste/publications/SCH_HEALTHY_2.pdf)

### Oregon

Oregon Clean Diesel Initiative provides funding to convert school buses to cleaner-burning fuel to protect school children. [http://www.deq.state.or.us/AQ/Factsheets/04-AQ012\\_DiesellInitiative.pdf](http://www.deq.state.or.us/AQ/Factsheets/04-AQ012_DiesellInitiative.pdf)

### Alaska

Request a handy checklist from EPA to assess your school’s environmental issues by contacting Don Dossett at 206-553-1783 or [dossett.donald@epa.gov](mailto:dossett.donald@epa.gov)

## Spokane School District Receives Indoor Air Quality Award

Congratulations, Spokane Public Schools! They received EPA’s National Model of Sustained Excellence Award, joining a select group of only 12 others in the nation to receive this award at a ceremony in Washington, DC. This award acknowledges schools and school districts that provide outstanding indoor air quality for their students. For more information, visit <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/tfsawards2009.html>

