

Welcome to the Spring 2010 edition of EPA Healthy School NEWS!

We hope you find this newsletter useful in providing information on how to keep schools environmentally healthy for our children. In this edition, we focus on how you can help reduce the presence of harmful chemicals that may be in your school. Specifically we provide articles, tips, and links on how to reduce pesticide use, address PCBs in caulk, use green cleaning techniques, and participate in EPA's Chemical Cleanout Campaign. We also continue to provide information on available resources and happenings in your state.

We are excited about the positive response we received from our first edition and look forward to your continued questions and feedback. Enjoy Healthy School NEWS, as well as the remainder of your 2009-2010 school year!

Sincerely,



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

In This Issue

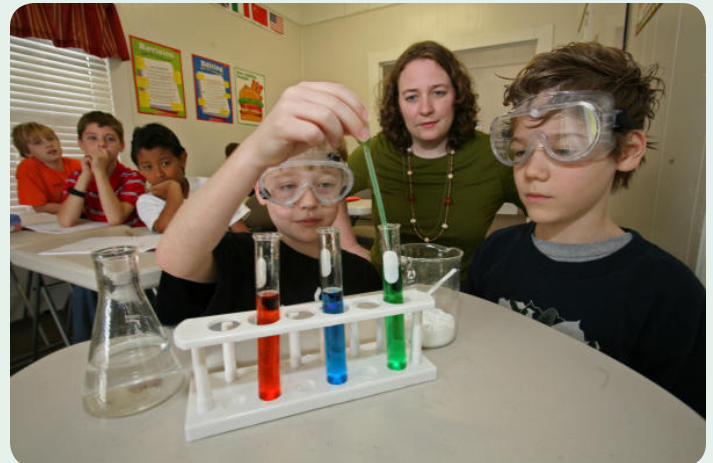
School Integrated Pest Management

**Green Cleaning – Protect Human Health
without Harming the Environment**

**Caulk Containing PCBs May Be Present In
Older Schools and Buildings**

School Chemical Cleanout Campaign

What's Happening In Your State



Hot Topic

Availability of Indoor Air Quality Monitor Stations for Washington Schools

School Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) can affect concentration, attendance, and student performance. Students and staff exposed to poor IAQ are at an increased risk of short-term health problems such as fatigue and nausea, as well as long-term problems such as asthma.

K-12 schools in Washington are encouraged to borrow one of WA Department of Health's (DOH) free portable indoor air quality monitoring stations to promote healthy school environments. The stations monitor carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, humidity, temperature, and airborne dust levels. Learn more about the loan program at DOH's School Environmental Health & Safety Web site: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/ts/School/iaqmonitor.htm> For general information on School IAQ or to receive a school IAQ action kit visit: <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/index.html>

School Integrated Pest Management

EPA encourages all schools to adopt integrated pest management (IPM). IPM aims to protect health by reducing exposure to both pests and pesticides. IPM decreases asthma triggers, insect bites and stings, and the possible health effects associated with pesticide exposure. Peer-reviewed studies have also found IPM to be more effective at pest control than conventional pesticide use in an urban environment.



IPM programs work by reducing sources of food, water, and shelter for pests and only using least-hazardous pesticides after other methods have been exhausted. IPM requires consistent monitoring and recordkeeping of pests and corrective actions. A successful program also requires the coordination and necessary training of school staff. Examples of IPM include: excluding pests from the building by caulking holes, vacuuming food crumbs, and reducing clutter.

School IPM requirements vary by state. In Oregon, a bill was passed that requires each school district to have a school IPM plan and a designated IPM coordinator by July 1, 2012. Contact your state agriculture agency for more information on your state's school pest management requirements.

For more information on school IPM visit <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/ipm/> or contact Juliann Barta at 206-553-1495 or barta.juliann@epa.gov

What's Happening In Your State

Idaho

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality has a program called Idaho Chemical Roundup to assist schools in adopting best practices for managing laboratory chemicals and wastes. Visit http://www.deq.state.id.us/waste/educ_tools/chemical_roundup.cfm to learn more.

Oregon

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and EPA are currently doing air toxics monitoring at two Oregon schools. Learn what you can do to reduce outdoor air pollution near your school: <http://www.deq.state.or.us/aq/toxics/whatyoucando.htm>

Alaska

Alaska has a School Health Program to enhance school health programming and improve the school health environment. Get more information and resources here: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/chronic/school/default.htm>

Washington

Washington State University has created a winter edition of the IAQ for NW Schools Newsletter: http://www.energy.wsu.edu/documents/building/iaq/nl/10_wtr_iaq_nl.pdf You'll find articles on IPM, Radon, Molds and Moisture, and more. Also for those schools in or near Washington, you may wish to check out the Energy Facilities Conference in Leavenworth in May: <http://www.energy.wsu.edu/apps/PlantOperations/EnergyFacilitiesConnectionsConference.aspx>

Green Cleaning – Protect Human Health without Harming the Environment

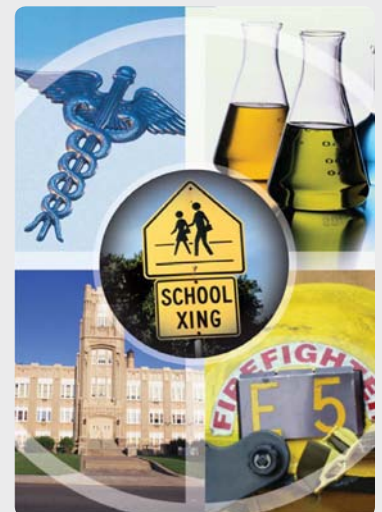
Many cleaning products contain harmful chemicals that can have serious adverse effects on janitorial staff, building occupants, and the environment. On average, custodians use 28 gallons of chemicals each year, 25% of those chemicals are classified as hazardous chemicals. There are many effects of traditional cleaners, including negative environmental and health impacts, increased health insurance costs, and an increased rate of absences for students and staff.

Green cleaning is a new approach to janitorial services that offers better environmental performance and reduced risks to children and staff, while retaining the same sanitation quality as traditional, more chemical-intensive methods.

There are 3rd Party Certification programs that exist to help decide which cleaning products to choose. Look for the Green Seal, Ecologo, and EPA's Design for the Environment logo on products.

EPA has also developed a Green Cleaning Pollution Prevention Calculator to forecast the environmental benefits of green cleaning. Visit <http://204.12.33.69/janitor/> to see how going green will affect your school.

For more information on buying green, contact Carolyn Gangmark at gangmark.carolyn@epa.gov.



Caulk Containing PCBs May Be Present In Older Schools and Buildings

Between 1950 and 1978, caulk containing potentially harmful PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) was used in many buildings, including schools. Although PCBs were banned in the United States in 1978, contaminated caulk still exists in older schools that have not had the caulk replaced. In general, schools built after 1978 do not contain PCBs in caulk.

PCBs accumulate in the body in high levels only after prolonged exposure to the chemical. PCB bioaccumulation in children can damage immune, reproductive, nervous, and endocrine systems.



Children can be exposed to PCBs by:

- Breathing in dust contaminated with PCBs
- Touching caulk and contaminated soil directly
- Putting their hands into their mouths after touching the caulk, soil, and surrounding building materials.

Restricting children from areas where PCB-containing caulk is located, promoting safe work practices during renovation activities in schools, and removing caulk safely as part of a PCB removal or renovation project reduces the potential for exposure.

For more information about PCBs in your schools caulk call EPA's PCBs in Caulk Hotline: 888-835-5372, visit <http://www.epa.gov/pcbsincaulk/> or contact Tristen Gardner, at 206-553-6240 or gardner.tristen@epa.gov.

School Chemical Cleanout Campaign

The EPA's Schools Chemical Cleanout Campaign (SC3) promotes chemical management programs that remove outdated, unknown, or unneeded amounts of dangerous or inappropriate



chemicals from K-12 schools. SC3 also promotes the creation of policies and practices that prevent future accumulations of chemicals and encourages responsible management practices of chemicals used in schools. A chemical management program will protect the health and safety of students and school personnel by preventing fires, spills, and chemical accidents, and by reducing chemical exposures.

Key components of a chemical management program include:

1. Assembling a team of teachers, facilities staff, school nurses, administrators, and community partners with technical expertise to assess chemical safety issues and set policy
2. Establishing a chemical management plan;
3. Conducting periodic chemical inventories;
4. Budgeting for chemical purchases, management and disposal;
5. Establishing environmentally preferable purchasing practices;
6. Encouraging school staff to use the smallest amounts of the least hazardous chemicals; and
7. Offering chemical management and safety training for school staff.

Visit www.epa.gov/sc3 or contact Margo Young at young.margo@epa.gov for more tools and information about starting a chemical management program in your school.

Healthy School NEWS is published by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10. Region 10 includes the states of Washington, Idaho, Alaska and Oregon and the tribes within those boundaries. For general information about school environmental health or to provide feedback on this newsletter, please contact Margo Young at young.margo@epa.gov. To be added or removed from the distribution list, please email pollow.george@epa.gov with your request. Contact Region 10's Public Environmental Resource Center, the education, publication and information gateway to EPA's Region 10 Office, for free publications and educational resources for your school. Call at (800) 424-4EPA or email epa-seattle@epa.gov.

EPA Environmental Education: www.epa.gov/enviroed/

EPA Children's Environmental Health: www.epa.gov/children