

# Enviro-Solutions Floor Care Case Study

## Enviro-Solutions meets green floor care

*By: Mike Sawchuk, VP & General Manager, for Enviro-Solutions, the leading manufacturer of a full-line of proven green cleaning chemicals, Green Seal and EcoLogo certified.*

As green cleaning products continue to sweep through our industry, the transfer from conventional to environmentally preferable floor care products is of particular concern. This is because floor finishes, sealers, strippers, and other products are some of the harshest chemicals used in the cleaning industry.

Studies show these products can cause skin irritations, headaches, and burns. Cases of permanent eye and organ damage have even been reported. The health risks are even greater when these products are mishandled or used incorrectly, which unfortunately is not uncommon.

In fact, from 1993 to 1997, 12 percent of custodial work-related injury cases reported in four major states were associated with floor care products. Why? What's the problem with conventional floor care chemicals?

Although they have served us well over the years, many traditional floor care products contain high levels of VOCs (Volatile Organic Compounds) that can harm indoor air quality. For example, 2-butoxyethanol, a common ingredient found in many conventional strippers, is considered a potential human carcinogen that can easily be absorbed through the skin, breaking down red blood cells and damaging internal organs. This ingredient is also suspected of being a respiratory toxicant. And zinc — popular in many floor finishes (especially those that have the "wet look" appearance after burnishing) — can be toxic to aquatic life.

### Going green

But there's good news. In just the past couple of years, companies such as Enviro-Solutions have developed new floor care products that are more environmentally responsible and safer to both the user and building occupants — and end users indicate they work as well as or better than traditional products. Additionally, selecting these green floor care products has recently become much easier because some have been certified by either Green Seal® or EcoLogoM, the leading North American green certification organizations.

A floor care chemical and its ingredients must be analyzed to be green certified. To earn certification, the product must show that it:

- has a reduced impact on the environment when compared to similar products used for the same or similar purpose;

- includes ingredients (or a greater number of ingredients) that are biodegradable and non-toxic;
- performs as well as, if not better than, a comparable non-green product;
- does not include (or has considerably fewer) harmful ingredients, such as VOCs, carcinogens, and endocrine disruptors, which can harm glands, hormones, and many body functions;
- does not contain hazardous by-products;
- is packaged in recyclable materials; and
- meets all safety standards for use of the product.



## Demand grows for green floor care

One of the most interesting aspects of green cleaning is the fact that it has been customer driven — our customers are asking us to use cleaning products that are more environmentally responsible. And it appears this demand will increase.

According to a study\* released in 2006, environmentally preferable floor care products will account for the largest share of cleaning product demand, reaching approximately 40 percent of all products sold by 2010. Enviro-Solutions has heard the call. Not only does the company have a complete line of green-certified floor care products such as strippers, sealer, finish, restorers, neutral floor cleaner, and haze away/ice melt haze remover available now, but it plans to introduce more in the coming years.

Ultimately, the goal of green cleaning is to protect our health. Transferring to green-certified or less harmful floor care products is a giant step in the right direction.

*\*Published in 2006 by the Bharat Book Bureau, an India-based research group established in 1989.*



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