



Custodial Services Sustainability Initiative

Our mission is to provide an environment for learning and discovery at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. We will fulfill our mission while using environmentally responsible cleaning products, equipment, and sustainable processes.

Purpose

This Sustainability Initiative affirms our commitment to be a responsible member of the university community, communicates our dedication to provide a safe and healthful environment, and expresses our vision for the future.

Our goals

Use Environmentally Preferred Products. It is our responsibility to safeguard the environment and public health.

Practice Conservation. We will conserve energy, water, and other resources while providing high quality service.

Support Sustainability. We will use products and procedures which allow for the systematic reuse of materials and reduction of waste.

Environmental safeguards and strategies employed to meet our goals.

1. Aerosols, abrasive powder, and flammable products have been removed from the workplace.
2. The cleaning product line has been minimized. We use either Green Seal GS-37 approved products or products with low-volatile organic compounds (VOC). A tracking system is established to monitor chemical use.
3. Hand soaps do not contain antimicrobial agents. (triclosan and triclocarban)
4. All products used by Custodial Services are packaged in cardboard and plastic containers that are recycled after use.
5. Disinfectants are used only minimally on skin-contact areas in restrooms and for cleaning blood and body spills.
6. Cleaning frequencies and work schedules have been optimized for areas of greatest use.
7. Daily floor care maintenance is performed on a set schedule to prolong floor finish life. Periodic floor stripping and refinishing projects are performed as needed rather than on a set schedule to conserve resources and minimize the use of chemicals.

8. The broad use of new-technology reusable microfiber cleaning cloths, wet mops and dust mops minimizes waste, reduces the use of chemicals, and increases the effectiveness of the cleaning procedures.
9. Color-coded tools are used to prevent any cross-contamination from restrooms and enable correct use by employees who have English as a second language.
Color-coded tools include:
 - Microfiber cloths which are color-coded for specific uses.
 - Yellow cloths are used in restrooms on toilets and urinals.
 - Red cloths are used for general cleaning in restrooms.
 - Green cloths are used for general cleaning outside of restrooms.
 - Labeled, color-coded containers, which correspond to the microfiber color code, are used to organize cleaning tools on custodial carts and identify where the tools are to be used.
 - Cleaning chemicals on custodial carts are dispensed from color-coded containers and bottles with manufacturer's silk-screen labels and directions.
 - A separate, color-coded microfiber wet mop is used in restrooms only.
 - Different colors of protective gloves are used with one specific color for use in restrooms and a different color for other use.
10. Personal Protective Equipment including protective gloves, safety goggles or eyewear, dust masks, and nonslip footwear is provided to all custodians and required when cleaning restrooms, mixing chemicals, when working overhead, or when stripping floors.
11. Flip-top applicators, foam applicators, and coarse-spray only from trigger sprayers are required when applying chemicals to avoid the inhalation of fine particulates and the overuse and waste of cleaning products.
12. Safeguards and sustainable strategies are emphasized in all custodial training as all employees are encouraged and supported to work in an environmentally responsible manner. Employees are directly involved in the testing of new products and equipment.
13. Chemical management systems are employed wherever possible to facilitate the proper dilution of chemical products and limit employee exposure to chemical concentrates.
 - Chemical dilution systems are mounted in custodial rooms.
 - Portable dilution devices are available for remote work sites.
 - Ready-to-use products are used where appropriate for safety and efficiency.
14. Building entryways receive priority cleaning. High-performance entrance mat systems are installed to trap dirt, moisture, and pollutants before they can migrate into the buildings. The mat systems are cleaned regularly to retain their effectiveness.

15. Dual, large-roll paper towel and toilet tissue dispensers are used to minimize packaging and waste. Paper products must meet the EPA standards for post-consumer recycled content:
 - Paper Towels – 40% post-consumer recycled content.
 - Toilet Tissue – 20% post-consumer recycled content.
16. High density trash liners are used and only on a minimal basis in vending areas.
17. High filtration vacuum cleaners are used and carry the Carpet and Rug Institute’s Seal of Approval for vacuums. These vacuum cleaners employ HEPA (High Efficiency Particulate Air) filters, sealed casings and hose connections, disposable paper collection bags, are ergonomically designed and operate at a sound level of less than 70dbA.
18. Low-moisture carpet extractors with high pressure and high vacuum are used to decrease drying time, extend the life of the carpet, and protect against mold and mildew. Air movers are used to facilitate faster drying times.
19. Powered floor scrubbing machines are equipped with variable-speed feed pumps, on-board chemical metering, F.A.S.T. (Foam-Activated Scrubbing Technology) and other low-moisture and metered-solution systems to optimize the use of water and cleaning chemical.
20. Electrical-powered cleaning equipment is preventively-maintained on a set schedule. Properly maintained equipment is safe and efficient to operate and has a prolonged working life.

Our Vision

Custodial Services will advance our goals by emphasizing environmentally safe and effective practices and use of products. We will test the application of new advances in the industry and will adopt and implement concepts that lead to greater sustainability and the conservation of our resources.