

CLEAN SCHOOLS

SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

The Department of Education and Training (DET) recognises that the health and safety of its employees, students, parents, contractors, visitors as well as the broader school community, is of paramount importance.

DET is committed to providing and maintaining clean, healthy and sanitary conditions in schools. It seeks to minimise the use of chemicals in the school environment. DET specifies that products and materials should cause no danger to the health of the school community. This commitment is demonstrated by the rigorous tender process which cleaning and maintenance contractors undergo and by the contractual obligations outlined in DET's school cleaning contracts.

Cleaning contractors are required to provide the ACT Government with copies of Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all cleaning chemicals used on the school premises. MSDS provide concise information about substances, associated risks and information required for the safe handling of hazardous substances. They warn of the consequences if proper care is not taken. They contain information on substance contents, use, health effects, first aid, safe storage and handling and each chemical is rated from 0-4 with 0 having a nil reading and 4 having an extreme reading.

MSDS are maintained for all chemicals used within a school and include chemicals kept in staff rooms as well as in science, technology and art rooms. Regulations require that all employees have access to and receive instruction in reading MSDS.

DET is committed to using chemicals which have negligible impact on the environment and are non hazardous and have nil readings.

Cleaning contracts clearly set out cleaning contractors' obligations as follows:

Cleaning contractors must:

- (a) comply with relevant OH&S legislation as it relates to the cleaning industry;
- (b) liaise with the departmental OH&S workplace delegate notified by the Territory to the Contractor on matters relating to health and safety;
- (c) supply to the Territory copies of Material Safety Data Sheets for all cleaning chemicals used on the school premises;
- (d) not store dangerous, flammable or corrosive substances on the school premises;
- (e) ensure all cleaning liquids are stored in tamper proof containers;

- (f) ensure that, where practicable all products, substances and materials used in the performance of the Services are supplied by a quality assured company whose processes meet the AS/NZS ISO 9001:2008 *Quality Management Systems Requirements Standard* and/or AS/NZS ISO 14001:2004 *Environmental Management Systems*, are not harmful to any person if used in accordance with manufacturer's directions for use and are 'environmentally friendly', for example:
 - (i) products which contain no hazardous ingredients;
 - (ii) products which do not need to be disposed of as hazardous waste;
 - (iii) products which have a pH closer to neutral;
 - (iv) products which do not ignite easily;
 - (v) products with low volatile organic compound (being those that readily produce vapours at room temperature and normal atmospheric pressure, including petrol, solvents and fuel oxygenates);
 - (vi) products which are biodegradable;
 - (vii) products which have a phosphate content not above 0.5%;
 - (viii) products which contain no fragrances or dyes;
 - (ix) products with minimal packaging required, and such packaging being recyclable;
- (g) ensure that when a product is disposed of, it will not constitute a hazardous waste;
- (h) provide the principal with a detailed list and description of all materials being used in the performance of the services, and
- (i) replace materials which are deemed and notified by the Territory as unsuitable for use in schools or Territory premises, with suitable materials at no cost to the Territory.

DET is committed to maintaining a healthy environment in schools while at the same time reducing the impact on the environment.

Please contact your principal if you have any concerns regarding the use of chemical products used in your school.

Mark Whybrow
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Corporate Services
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