



## **Green Cleaning and Custodial Products Purchasing Policy**

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### **Policy Background**

Responsible Position for Policy: Sustainability Manager

Office/Department Responsible for Policy: Office of Energy and Sustainability

Division Responsible for Policy: Facilities Operations, Procurement, and Auxiliary Services

Scope of Policy: The Policy applies to all faculty, staff, and students who purchase cleaning supplies for Oberlin College and Conservatory.

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Last Revision Date: N/A

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### **I. Policy Purpose**

(A) In March 2004, the Board of Trustees adopted the following general Environmental Policy Statement:

The core mission of Oberlin College is the education of its students. One aspect of such education is the demonstration by its actions of the College's concern for, and protection of its physical environment. Oberlin College must be a responsible steward of the environment. As such, the College will seek 1) to reduce the rate at which it contributes to the depletion and degradation of natural resources; 2) to increase the use of renewable resources; and 3) to consider other measures that can enhance the physical environment in which we live. The development of priorities and the implementation of decisions regarding energy production and use, the use and development of our grounds, facilities construction, modernization, maintenance, transportation, and materials use will be informed by the environmental impact they have. The President or delegated officials will periodically advise the community of the College's progress in this area.<sup>1</sup>

(B) The Cleaning and Custodial Products Purchasing Policy (Policy) aims to regulate the purchase of products used for cleaning at Oberlin College by outlining the requirements and the encouraged actions for such purchasing.

(C) The Policy will bring the College closer to its natural resource goals by targeting products with documented low impact on natural ecosystems, including those directly affecting human health.

(D) The Policy will bring the College closer to its carbon neutrality goals by targeting products with lower carbon footprints.

### **II. Policy Statement**

1 [Oberlin College Environmental Policy, March 2004](#)

- (A) All cleaning and custodial products purchased for on-campus use must have at least one of the following certifications: Green Seal, EcoLogo, USDA BioPreferred, EPA Safer Choice, or meet the efficiency requirements for Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) or LEED compliance. (See Section IV for definitions)
- (B) If a desired cleaning product has another certification aside from the ones listed above, reach out to the Sustainability Manager in the Office of Energy and Sustainability (OES) for approval.
- (C) Several commonly used brands have filters that can help guide the selection of products with sustainable attributes and 3rd party certifications, including Diversey Products, Spartan Chemicals, Tork, Revolution, Afia (NCL), and Renown from Home Depot. These brands can be found and purchased through ObieBuy or Sciquest, on websites like Home Depot, Staples, Ferguson, Nichols, and Aramsco.

### III. Policy Scope/Eligibility

- (A) The Policy applies to all departments, staff, students, and contractors who purchase cleaning products or custodial supplies for Oberlin College and Conservatory.
- (B) The Policy is mandated for institutional purchases with college resources, but provides guidelines for others who are purchasing cleaning products for personal use.

### IV. Definitions

- (A) Cleaning supplies and products: Cleaning products and supplies, both those used by custodial staff to supply and clean spaces, and those consumed by everyone using those spaces. These items include (but are not limited to): multi-purpose cleaners, bathroom cleaners, disinfectants, electronic cleaners, vacuums, floor cleaning products, glass cleaners, paper towels, toilet paper, soap, and hand sanitizer.
- (B) Green Seal: Green Seal is a third party certification for “cleaning, sanitary and facilities care products and services” according to human health and environmental criteria to minimize waste, ensure clean water, and protect the climate. View standards lists and specific criteria [on their website](#).<sup>2</sup> The Green Seal website also has lists of specific certified products to browse, for easy location of certified products.
- (C) EPA Safer Choices: EPA Safer Choice label is given to products that meet the [Safer Choice Standard](#)
- (D) EcoLogo: EcoLogo certifications are voluntary, multi-attribute, life cycle-based environmental certifications that indicate a product has undergone rigorous scientific testing and exhaustive auditing to prove its compliance with [ISO 14024 standards](#) for environmental labels. The program is accredited by the [Global Ecolabelling Network \(GEN\)](#) and is recognized internationally as an important tool for promoting environmentally-friendly products.
- (E) Post consumer recycled vs pre consumer recycled: “Post-consumer material is defined as waste material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product, which can no longer be used for its intended purpose. Pre-consumer material is defined as material diverted from the waste stream during the manufacturing process.”<sup>3</sup>
- (F) USDA BioPreferred Biobased certified: “Biobased products are derived from plants and other renewable agricultural, marine, and forestry materials. The USDA Certified Biobased Product label is designed to provide useful information to consumers about the biobased content of the product. The label assures a consumer that the product contains a USDA-verified amount of renewable biological ingredients.”<sup>4</sup>
- (G) Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) requirements for efficiency: CRI is a third party certification for vacuums, extractors, cleaning systems, cleaning products, and service providers. The Seal of Approval and Green Label Plus programs scientifically measure cleaning efficacy and certify products.

2 [Green Seal Standards](#)

3 [Definition for post vs pre-consumer recycled material](#)

4 [USDA BioBased overview sheet](#)

- (H) LEED compliant: LEED only certifies green buildings, spaces, neighborhoods, homes, cities, and communities. However, a product can be in compliance with LEED standards without being certified. In this case, LEED gives [guidelines](#) for the types of supplies that should be used when cleaning LEED certified buildings or spaces.

## V. Administration

- (A) The administration of the Policy will be managed by the Office of Energy and Sustainability (OES). The Sustainability Manager is responsible for keeping the Policy up to date, coordinating a detailed review with all relevant stakeholders at least once every 5 years, and creating institutional guidelines to implement the Policy.

## VI. Procedures

- (A) Reporting: Annually, at the close of the fiscal year, the Office of Energy and Sustainability will request and review reports from Obiebuy and Sciquest on cleaning products and custodial supplies purchased by the College, specifically from Home Depot, Staples, Ferguson, Nichols and Aramsco.
- (B) Enforcement and Non-Compliance: In case of non-compliance to the Policy, the purchaser will have a meeting with the Office of Energy and Sustainability to discuss the reasoning behind non-compliance and how to address it.
- (C) Policy Waiver: If a cleaning product is not available with the designated standard, the Sustainability Manager can review and waive the requirement. To receive a waiver, the department ordering the product may contact the Office of Energy and Sustainability. The Sustainability Manager will review the qualities of the product in question and may provide technical assistance by finding a suitable alternative, or waiving the requirement.

## VII. Related Information

- (A) Related Policies:
  - (1) Oberlin College Environmental Policy - Approved May 2004  
([https://www.oberlin.edu/sites/default/files/content/office/environmental-sustainability/documents/environmental\\_policy.pdf](https://www.oberlin.edu/sites/default/files/content/office/environmental-sustainability/documents/environmental_policy.pdf))
  - (2) Oberlin College Environmental Policy Implementation Plan - Adopted by the General Faculty of Oberlin College November 2015  
([https://www.oberlin.edu/sites/default/files/content/office/environmental-sustainability/documents/environmental\\_policy\\_implementation\\_plan.pdf](https://www.oberlin.edu/sites/default/files/content/office/environmental-sustainability/documents/environmental_policy_implementation_plan.pdf))
- (B) Other considerations for dissemination of information related to the policy
  - (1) The Office of Energy and Sustainability will coordinate an annual meeting at the beginning of each fiscal year with the Institutional Buyer. The purpose of the meeting is to review the Policy and discuss recommended revisions as needed. The meeting will also be an opportunity to discuss challenges and any non-compliance issues.
  - (2) The Policy will be posted on the OES website as well as posted in the Campus Digest at least once per year.

## VIII. Approval Process

- (A) Frequency of Review: The Policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Office of Energy and Sustainability in collaboration with the Institutional Buyer and the Facilities Manager that oversees the janitorial staff. The Committee on Environmental Sustainability will review the Policy every five years.
- (B) Review Process: If revisions or changes are recommended, the Sustainability Manager will manage the process.

- (C) Necessary Approval Constituents: Any changes to the Policy should be reviewed by the Committee on Environmental Sustainability and reviewed and approved by the Vice President for Finance and Administration.