

green earth blog

Key reasons to implement a green cleaning process

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Many homes and businesses are now aware that considering the environment during your cleaning process is something that can be easily achieved. However, for people to understand and be aware that green cleaning is more than simply switching to the use of green cleaning products is less common.

Green cleaning uses a holistic approach to the cleaning and maintenance of a home or facility. It includes having the right equipment and products, commitment, a plan that focuses on high traffic areas and education that in turn impacts attitudes and behaviours towards green cleaning.



Without the education of why green cleaning is necessary and the knowledge of the impact it can have on various factors, domestically and commercially, then the idea of green cleaning is at risk of merely becoming just another "fad".

The following are key factors that businesses and homes should be educated on to understand the full impact of what a green cleaning process could mean for them.

Health and wellbeing

The most obvious factor to health and wellbeing is that the exposure to toxic chemicals is eliminated. To the average person, cleaning agents and detergents when used correctly are not harmful; however, they can have serious consequences to the vulnerable. The vulnerable include pets, particularly newborns, as well as the sick or elderly.

Toxic chemicals can affect breathing capabilities as well as indoor air quality. Another key reason why chemicals can be dangerous to the vulnerable is that it is not efficient against the elimination of disease and bacteria. Using a green cleaning agent such as steam at a high temperature completely removes all pathogens, disease and bacteria.

Cleaning efficiency

Traditional cleaning methods that use large amounts of water, as well as manual scrubbing and detergents are not sufficient for many cleaning applications. The reason being is that most of these methods either transfer the dirt or bacteria from one surface to another or cause a greater build up of dirt and grime rather than removal due to creating a sticky substance i.e. excess detergent.

Using sustainable cleaning products, such as microfibre cloths, or sustainable cleaning methods such as high temperature steam can greatly improve cleaning results. Compared to other methods, steam is renowned for being a top and sustainable cleaning method, particularly for industries where infection control is paramount.

According to the *International Commission on the Microbiological Specifications for Foods (ICMSF) – HACCP in Microbiological Safety and Quality* (1988) a comparison was made of the more commonly used disinfectants which included steam, chlorine, iodophors, quats and acid anionic surfactants. Steam resulted in the best disinfectant compared to other common methods. The results concluded that steam ranked number one compared to other disinfectants, and was the most effective disinfectant against common bacteria such as:

- gram-positive bacteria e.g. clostridia, Staphylococcus etc
- Gram-negative bacteria e.g. E. coli, Salmonella etc.
- Bacteriophage

Financial and legal requirements

Particularly for commercial facilities, the financial savings of green cleaning practices can save significant amounts of money. When green products and processes are implemented, costs decrease due to the reduction in chemical consumption and the number of cleaning chemicals needed, as well as green cleaning processes such as placing door mats in high traffic areas limiting the resources needed to clean an area.

Legally, some businesses, such as schools, have an obligation to only procure and use environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products. The accommodation sector also prioritises sustainable processes, for example, asking guests to place used and clean towels/sheets in separate areas so water and energy is saved from not having to re-clean already clean bedding or towels.

Overall, sustainable cleaning doesn't just decrease our environmental footprint; it is actually easier to implement than traditional methods. However, the key element is education. Once businesses and individuals are correctly educated on green cleaning practices, and understand the impacts and outcomes, sustainable practices will become the common way of operating.



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