

GREEN CLEANING IN SCHOOLS

OVERVIEW OF STATE LAWS

Environmental Law Institute

Part of the ELI Series

[*Topics in School
Environmental Health:
Overview of State Laws*](#)

Why is this Issue Important for School Environmental Health?

Cleaning products are important for maintaining a sanitary environment in schools. However, certain chemicals in cleaning products may be harmful to the environment inside and outside schools and may impact the health of students, maintenance workers, and other school staff. "Green cleaning" addresses these risks by: selecting products that reduce impacts on health and the environment; applying these products properly; and implementing maintenance practices that minimize exposure to cleaning products. A wide variety of green cleaning products are now available, and some organizations and agencies have developed programs to certify products based on health and sustainability criteria.

For more information on U.S. EPA and New York state green cleaning programs, see <http://www.epa.gov/epp/pubs/cleaning.htm> and <https://greencleaning.ny.gov/policies.asp>.

What Types of State Policies are Included in this Overview?

Many states and school districts have begun to adopt green cleaning programs and practices. This Overview highlights state laws and regulations that require use of green cleaning products by schools or that direct state agencies to take action to facilitate/encourage green cleaning in schools, though it does not necessarily include all such policies.

Most of the state laws and regulations described below require schools to use green cleaning products, while a small number recommend or facilitate their use. Most, but not all, of the laws that require green cleaning products also direct schools to use only products/product certifications that have been approved by the state or to follow guidance established by the state pursuant to the law. Only a small number of states include other requirements, such as use of green cleaning practices, training for school maintenance staff, or reporting on green cleaning activities.

States covered in the summary chart below: **CT, DC, HI, IL, IA, MD, MO, MT, NV, NY, VT**

STATE & CITATION	GREEN CLEANING SUMMARY OF LAW/REGULATION	LAW REQUIRES SCHOOLS TO USE GC PRODUCTS?
CONNECTICUT Ct. Gen. Stat. §§ 10-231g, 10-220	Connecticut law requires local and regional boards of education to adopt green cleaning programs for all of their school buildings and facilities. The law prohibits the use of cleaning products in schools unless the products meet national or international certification standards approved by the Department of Administrative Services. The law requires school boards to report to the state on actions taken to implement the programs and to provide information about their programs to the school community, including a notification that school staff and others are prohibited from bringing to school “any consumer product that is intended to clean, deodorize, sanitize or disinfect.”	YES
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA D.C. Code § 38-825.01	District of Columbia law requires that all public schools in the District of Columbia use environmentally-friendly cleaning products.	YES
HAWAII Hi. Rev. Stat. §§302A-1509, 321-26.5	Hawaii law directs the Department of Health to require all public schools to give first preference, where feasible, to the purchase and use of environmentally-sensitive cleaning and maintenance products that have been certified through the Green Seal program. The requirement applies to several product categories listed in the law and to other categories that may be identified by the Department of Health. A related law directs the Department to maintain a list of Green Seal-certified products.	YES (first preference)
ILLINOIS Il. Comp. Stat., Ch. 105, §§ 140/1--99	Illinois law requires all public elementary and secondary schools and all non-public elementary and secondary with 50 or more students to establish a green cleaning policy and to exclusively purchase and use environmentally-sensitive cleaning products, pursuant to guidelines and specifications established by the state. An exception is provided if adopting a policy would result in increased cleaning costs to a school – provided the school gives annual written notice to the state that adopting a policy would not be economically feasible. The state developed guidelines in 2008 that require, for several products categories, the purchase and use of products that meet the criteria of the Green Seal or EcoLogo programs or (for chemicals) the EPA Design for the Environment Formulator program. Schools may also seek alternative qualification for products not already certified by submitting independent documentation that the products meet these standards. The guidelines also describe voluntary green cleaning practices that schools can adopt.	YES
IOWA Ia. Code § 8A.318	Iowa law requires school districts to purchase only cleaning and maintenance products identified by the state Department of Administrative Services or products that meet nationally-recognized standards. A school district may opt out of compliance with this requirement upon the affirmative vote of a majority of the members of the board of directors of the school district.	YES

<p>MARYLAND Md. Educ. Code § 5-112(e)</p>	<p>Maryland law requires county boards of education to procure green cleaning supplies for use in schools for several product categories listed in the law. Each board must adopt written policies that: require the use of green product cleaning supplies; establish purchasing guidelines that meet third-party certification standards; establish green cleaning practices; and require staff training. The boards must develop specifications that allow multiple avenues for certification of green cleaning supplies, including Green Seal, Green Label, Environmental Choice, Terra Choice, EcoLogo, or other nationally recognized, independent, third-party entity. An exception to these requirements is provided if procuring green product cleaning supplies is not practicable or economically feasible, and the law requires the school board to give annual written notice of this determination to the state Department of Education.</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>MISSOURI Mo. Rev. Stat. § 161.365</p>	<p>Missouri law requires the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to establish and disseminate to all school districts guidelines and specifications for green cleaning programs. School districts must, in turn, disseminate the guidelines to every school in the district. The voluntary guidelines established by the department include recommendations for green cleaning products and practices and encourage school districts to implement the recommendations. The guidelines reference the Green Seal and EcoLogo product certification programs, as well as the EPA Design for the Environment Formulator program (for chemicals), and describe considerations for purchasing products not covered by these programs.</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>MONTANA Mont. Admin. Rule § 37.111.841</p>	<p>Montana school health rules incorporate certain cleaning and maintenance requirements, including a ban on the use of deodorizers and odor-masking agents, and also state that: "As current non-green cleaning supplies are depleted it is recommended that they are replaced with cleaning products that are 'Green Products.'"</p>	<p>NO</p>
<p>NEVADA Nv. Rev. Stat. § 386.4195</p>	<p>Nevada law requires public schools to use only environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products for all floor surfaces. If a school district determines that the costs of complying with the requirement are "unreasonable and would place an undue burden on the efficient operation" of the district or a school, the district may purchase and use a floor cleaning product that is not environmentally sensitive. In order to do so, the district must first post notice of the product to be used on the district's web site.</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>NEW YORK 16 N.Y. Educ. Code § 409-i</p>	<p>New York law requires schools to identify and procure environmentally-sensitive cleaning and maintenance products. Schools are required to follow guidelines, specifications, and sample product lists developed by the state. The state Office of General Services has developed approved cleaning product guidelines based on the Green Seal and EcoLogo certification programs. The OGS website includes a list of approved green cleaning products, green cleaning training manuals, and information on creating and implementing a comprehensive green cleaning program.</p>	<p>YES</p>
<p>VERMONT 18 Vt. Stat. §§ 1781-1783</p>	<p>Vermont law requires those who provide cleaning products or contracted cleaning services to schools to provide and use only environmentally-preferable cleaning products that are either used by the state under state</p>	<p>YES</p>

	contract or certified by an independent, nationally-recognized organization that meets criteria established in the law. Under the law, air fresheners sold or distributed to schools or used by contracted cleaning services also must be certified as environmentally preferable. The law requires distributors and manufacturers to provide green cleaning training to school districts at no cost.	
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