

WALK THIS WAY TO “GREEN” FLOOR CARE



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Over the past decade, the concept of “Going Green” has taken the industry by storm, transforming views and attitudes about cleaning. For an industry many perceived as being stuck in the past and slow to adapt to change, it has experienced an invigorating makeover. Going Green has been arguably the number one trend in the cleaning industry – and it shows no signs of slowing down. As more people are becoming aware of the hazardous chemicals used in conventional cleaning and their impact on health and the environment, **the demand for Green Floor Care is growing stronger than ever.**

Consider all the ‘comings’ and ‘goings’ in any building facility and their corresponding impact on floor finishes: all the gritty dirt, grime, salt and calcium build-up, small stones, mud and outdoor allergens that are being tracked in from the outside. Moreover, pollutants are known to aggravate asthma and trigger allergic reactions. Controlling exposure to these contaminants and other triggers benefits the overall health of all those who visit your facility on a daily basis. Along with the desire for more natural and environmentally-friendly building materials, Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) has grown to be a large concern among managers in the last two decades.

Whether your industry is education, health care, hospitality, governmental or other, it is important to understand what to look for in a green floor care program. **When green finishes and strippers first entered the market, building managers were skeptical about their effectiveness.** Skepticism of “green” claims, ideas of questionable performance, and perceived higher price points deterred many end users from switching to green. However, since their inception, **technology and product formulation have evolved greatly.**

Manufacturers have responded to concerns by introducing products that meet the functional needs of the cleaner, while minimizing their impact on the environment. **Managers who were once reluctant to Go Green are now finding environmentally preferable floor coating and floor stripper alternatives that are comparable in performance to their traditional counterparts.** A wide range of environmentally preferable floor cleaning products can now handle the same commercial, industrial, and residential cleaning needs as traditional cleaners. Growing demand for these products has driven costs down. Environmentally friendly cleaners are now competitively priced.

However, not all green cleaning products are created equal. It is important to take the time to do the research to ensure that you have chosen the best products for your needs.

The product you choose should meet the following criteria:

- ✓ **Performance** – Saves time while cleaning effectively, and ensures the pristine appearance of your buildings.
- ✓ **People** – Safeguards the health and safety of building operators, custodial staff, employers, occupants and visitors.
- ✓ **Planet** – Raw materials should be biodegradable and meet the highest environmental standards for safe storage, transportation and disposal. More specifically, material used should be safe on our water system and aquatic life.



✓ **Price** – Priced competitively when compared to conventional cleaning products in the same categories. In addition, most green cleaning products come in concentrated form, thereby reducing shipping and storage cost.

Certifications: It is also important to check the product’s certifications. Chemicals that are certified by a third-party take out any guess-work for managers looking for products that meet green and health requirements. Some products may claim to be “green”, without having been certified by a reputable organization. Therefore, look for certified cleaning chemicals by organizations such as:



- **The EcoLogo Program:** Organization based in Canada that offers third-party certification of many different products including cleaners and janitorial paper products. EcoLogo is widely known as the premiere mark of environmental standards, and offers certification on a wide range of products.
- **Design for the Environment:** Allows manufacturers to put the DFE certification symbol on household and commercial products, such as cleaners and detergents, which meet stringent criteria for human and environmental health. Using these products can protect your health and the environment.
- **Green Seal:** Organization based in the United States since 1989. Green Seal is a non-profit organization that uses science-based programs to empower consumers, purchasers and companies to create a more sustainable world.

MSDS Sheets: It is important to review each product’s Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for ingredients that may harm the user. For example: There are environmental concerns with traditional floor finishes in that polymers with heavy metals, such as zinc, can make their way into the waterways and become harmful to aquatic life. To reduce their environmental impact, look for a green finish that does not contain zinc or other questionable ingredients. Take the time to understand what the symbols and classification mean and whether a product can cause skin or eye irritations. The Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) are important in that they provide you with instructions regarding proper handling and storage of the products, how to protect yourself from exposure, and safety measures for personal protection.

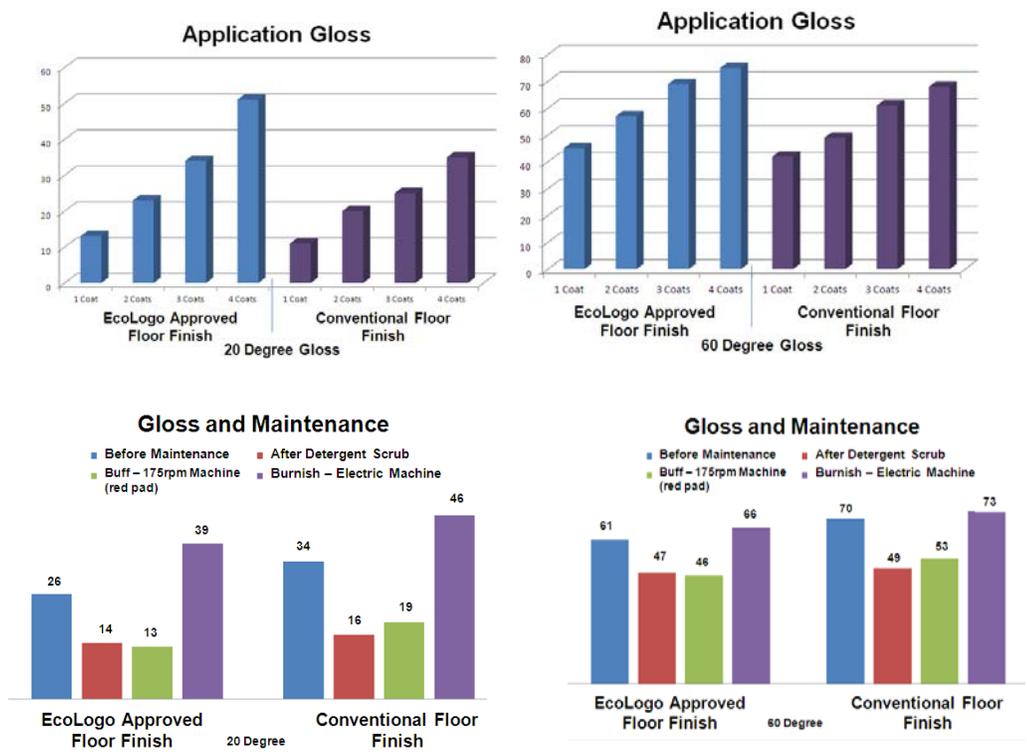
Today’s Technology

To qualify for certification, EcoLogo for example, requires that floor finishes and strippers have a pH of 11.5 and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) of 3 percent by weight at the greatest dilution, and 7 percent for heavy build-up. Traditional products have a pH of 13 or 14 and have 10 to 30% VOCs. A green floor stripper, by contrast, may have a VOC content of 6% or less and still be effective in removing finish. In addition to reducing or eliminating toxic ingredients from floor finishes and strippers, a floor-care system can be made environmentally preferable by increasing finish durability, thus reducing the need to strip and recoat as frequently. This also helps to reduce the release of chemicals that may affect plants and animals, as well as harmful chemicals that can accumulate in the environment. Other important considerations when selecting a sustainable floor care product are reduced odor and formulations that do not contain



2-butoxyethanol or aqueous ammonia. Some of the adverse health effects from exposure to 2-butoxyethanol or ammonia are eye and respiratory irritation. Conventional floor cleaners often include a surprisingly toxic ingredient list—people exposed to the heavy-duty cleaners may also experience dizziness, loss of concentration, fatigue, wheezing, coughing, asthma attacks, respiratory infections, and hypersensitivity pneumonitis. Manufacturers may comment that finishes and strippers at the high end of the VOC and pH spectrum contain stronger chemicals and will outperform the green alternatives. Products at this level are considered best suited for extremely difficult jobs or a program where floors have not been maintained properly, and should not be used liberally for the sake of occupants and the environment. It is important to discuss your needs with your manufacturer in order to choose the most suitable cleaning program: one that fulfils your requirements and meets your budget while simultaneously protecting the health and wellness of your workers and occupants.

In addition to pH and VOCs, **you should also look for products that do not contain heavy metals.** Industry experts have found that green floor strippers perform up to par with their non-green floor finishes. As end users continue to drive the demand, chemists continue to analyze the products and make scientific improvements to their formulas. **The evolution of green finishes continues to unfold, and arguably, this has a lot to do with the aesthetics and the meeting of cleaning expectations.** People fervently desire that “bowling alley” shine. However, floor cleaners that give you shine also give you off-gassing of petroleum-based polymers. In addition, most of the fragrances that accompany conventional floor cleaners are either indoor air pollutants on their own; or “inactive” alone can produce formaldehyde or other toxic air contaminants when mixed with ozone. The charts below demonstrate the effectiveness of sustainable floor finishes.



SCAN FOR ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION



About Avmor Ltd.: Headquartered in Laval, Quebec, Avmor is Canada's leading manufacturer of professional cleaning solutions aimed at the Jan/San and Foodservice markets. Avmor holds a GMP (Good Manufacturing Practices) license, which is a prerequisite to be able to manufacture hand soaps that include disinfection claims and a DIN (Drug Identification number) provided by Health Canada. Avmor offers a full range of hand care products. Avmor's complete line of cleaning products include Cleaners/Degreasers, Floor Care, Washroom Care, Food Service Care, Hand Care, BioMaxx, Disinfectants and others. Some of Avmor's signature brands are Av-mixx Dilution Control System, **Biomor Biological Cleaning Solutions**, Quick Stuff Food Service Cleaning System, Synergy Floor Care and **EcoPure**, its environmentally responsible sanitation program which features over 40 certified EcoLogo products. For over 60 years, Avmor has remained at the industry forefront, defining product performance standards and striving for the safest and most cost-effective cleaning systems for professional use. Avmor Ltd. is a privately held company.

Some end users find themselves applying green finishes more frequently in order to achieve the desired level of shine on floors. However, the technology being used today allows for increased shine and will save you time and labor. In addition, floor strippers are now available with higher dilutions, which also results in cost savings.

According to some experts, using less of a traditional floor care chemical is just as "green" as using environmentally preferable chemicals more frequently. In other words, using traditional finishing and stripping products that require less frequent maintenance is better for the environment than doing more passes using finishes and strippers considered "green." However, one must understand the harm caused by exposure to these traditional chemicals over a short period of time. It is necessary to use "Green" products in a way that will extend the life-cycle of the floor. To do so, you must find a product that is both green and reduces the overall impact on the facility. For example, an effective green cleaning program can reduce water consumption and can also directly impact a facility's sustainability efforts by reducing energy consumption, improving indoor air quality (IAQ) and contributing to certification programs such as LEED-EBOM (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Existing Buildings: certification), one for each 30 percent of total annual purchases by cost that meet sustainability criteria for certain cleaning and janitorial products. So, if a building uses 30 percent of its budget to purchase products that fit the bill, one point is rewarded; if a building uses 90 percent of its budget to buy sustainable products under the criteria, it gets three points. It is highly recommended that you discuss these issues with your manufacturer.

Communication and Training

Floor care maintenance is costly for any building facility. Reducing the frequency of these tasks, while keeping the location healthy, can help lower cleaning costs and stretch budgets significantly. Always follow the manufacturer's recommendations and ask for training. Select a supplier that is willing to take the time to train your staff and is available to help you, who can provide you with a personalized on-site demo and who can respond to customer inquiries within 24-hours. With proper training, your staff will know how to use the cleaning products and equipment in the most appropriate way to achieve the best results possible. Not only should you utilize the best cleaning products and equipment available to you, but you should also make use of the experience offered to you by your manufacturer.

As the demand for sustainability grows so will the demand for greener floor chemicals. Once perceived to be some of the most toxic products in a cleaner's arsenal, finishes and strippers are being transformed to meet the green demands of end users.

By embracing the concept of a cleaner and more sustainable floor care cleaning program for your business, you will be choosing products that will enable you to be a responsible leader in your community without compromising your health, the health of those around you, and that of future generations.

