

Establishing Asthma-Safe Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Specifications

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Asthma Task Force

Background

1. National Green Schools Initiative & Precautionary Principle
2. Assumptions re. Green Seal GS-37 standard & respiratory protection
3. Adding occupational asthma expertise to the SFE purchasing specification
4. Piloting SFUSD asthma-safe floor strippers and polishers



Occupational Health Surveillance

- What is Work-Related Asthma?
 - Work-aggravated asthma vs.
 - New-onset asthma
 - Sensitizer*-induced (often termed occupational asthma; no known threshold for sensitization)
 - Irritant-induced
 - Reactive Airway Disease from single acute exposure
 - Asthma from cumulative irritant exposure, such as chlorine
- Association of Occupational & Environmental Health Clinics listing of 250+ “Asthmagens”*



SENSOR Project

- California one of 4 states collecting surveillance data with NIOSH since 1993;
- 4000 CA reports of Work-Related Asthma; phone follow-up to all reports;
- Cleaners are 12% of WRA caseload from 4 states (80% of those were new-onset);
- School staff in top 10 professions (special ed teachers & janitors).



Partnership

- SF Dept. of the Environment (SFE)
 - MOU with SFE Director

- SF Unified School District (SFUSD)
 - MOU with Director of Custodial Services

- SF Asthma Task Force (SF ATF)
 - Schools & Child Development Committee
 - Support from Dept. Public Health staff

Memorandum of Understanding

Goal: Reduce occupational and school population exposure to chemical ingredients in institutional cleaners known to affect asthma.

The SF Asthma Task Force (via DPH administration of General Fund) will pay up to \$3,000 in compensation for the following pilot project to be conducted by SFUSD Custodial Services Department.

In exchange, SFUSD Director of Custodial Services, Martin Escalante, will implement the following strategies:

- Training to raise awareness: SFUSD Annual Custodial Training April 2nd, 2007 included discussion and demonstration of the above featured agreements by SF Department of Environment consultants.
- Trial purchase and use Green Seal-certified floor polish (finish) and floor stripper recommended by SFE consultant to reduce percentages of chemical ingredients known to affect asthma;
- Proper dilution to reduce exposures: SFUSD will obtain and use vendor-specific dilution equipment to ensure safe handling and proper dilution of all cleaning products;
- Use of micro-fiber mops to reduce exposures: SFUSD will increase use of microfiber mops, particularly for all products known to affect asthma;
- Tracking of pilot project goals being met: SFUSD agrees to track changes in product quantities needed before and after implementation of steps above, as well as whether substitute cleaning products met their performance needs;



Project Description

- Goal: Conditions for working and learning will not cause a negative impact on staff and students with asthma at SFUSD schools.

- Method: SF ATF augmented SF Department of Environment's consultant contract to assist SFUSD with EPP goal, including:
 - Training for custodial staff to introduce initiative
 - Research of asthma-safe cleaning products
 - Reducing volume of chemicals used by working with proper dilution and micro-fiber mops



Outcomes

- Selection criteria established for product choice and for pilot sites
- Purchase of floor stripper and polish without chemical ingredients known to affect asthma
- New products in use at 7 pilot schools
- Micro-fiber mops in use at 2 schools with access to laundry equipment
- “Agents of Change” video produced



Current Progress

- What is the current progress of the project?
- What goals have been achieved or are in progress?
- What are the next steps?
- What are the future implications of this effort?