



The Connection™
March 22nd, 2007

It's about time! Two

Thanks for your comments. Several readers plan to use the series as a basis for seminars and suggested key points. Others asked about Syd's environmental work from the 70's and another "questioned" my credentials (that was the kindest way I can describe it). We will get some of this material out to you next month. But right now let's go to step two of the Self Evaluation Sustainable Cleaning Chart.

Maximum Safety

After determining that a formulation is an effective cleaner, our next concern is safety for the Janitor and, in turn, everyone who comes in contact with the facility. You might want to review your injury and any Workman Compensation cases, back problems, skin irritation, accidents and illness patterns.

Some cleaning products are quite hazardous. For example: in 1964 when we were developing PortionPac, one of our prime target markets was hospitals because they understood the benefits of "Unit Dose" and "Portion Control" in nursing service, pharmacy and food service. The most popular disinfectants at that time were Synthetic Chlorinated Phenols. However this type of formulation had a long history of affecting the liver of people who came in contact with the products on a daily basis.

Hospitals used these hazardous formulations to clean every room and some would "fog" the rooms with that material. It affected the health of many housekeepers and you could often identify Housekeeping Workers by depigmentation blotches on their skin. We thought about making the product because Hospitals told us that was what they needed. But Syd said that we could not offer a product that we knew was so dangerous.

So we focused on educating the industry. It took many years, but along with a few other conscientious companies, like Airkem, we changed the industry to Quaternary Ammonium Compounds that were more effective at both cleaning and disinfection and were so much less harmful. No Germicide is totally "safe" but this was a big step forward in safety for our industry.

Today you do not have to depend on an environmental chemist like Syd. Third party certification on general cleaning products is available. There are several agencies and programs that can help you identify safe formulations; but the most demanding and extensive certification that a company can seek is Green Seal. This non-profit organization has been leading the industry since 1989. Today the demand for "green" chemicals are very high and Green Seal Certification is a simple way to accurately identify the safety level of

many of the products you are using. Go to the [Green Seal Certified Products](#) website to check them out.

Now you can determine the safety rating on a scale of 1 to 20. So if 80% of the products are on the list, your score would be 16. Depending on your industry you may not be able to use a high percentage of Green Seal Certified products but at least your self evaluation will tell you where you stand.

Performance

Safety _____ **(your score for today's subject)**

Accuracy

Minimization

Conservation