



February 2012

Welcome to this edition of *Occupational Health Watch*, an update of recent activities of the California Department of Public Health's Occupational Health Branch (OHB).

**Focus on...**

**Buying Safer Cleaning Products**

Cleaning products can be hazardous. They can be corrosive to eyes and skin, highly toxic, and can cause asthma and other breathing problems. Custodians, cleaners, and maintenance workers are most at risk from exposure to cleaning agents. The California Department of Public Health, Occupational Health Branch (OHB), has found that work-related asthma among custodians and cleaners is double the rate in the overall workforce. OHB has also found that other building occupants get asthma from cleaning chemicals used in their workplace.

Fortunately, it is now easier to find safer cleaning products. Two independent organizations, EcoLogo and Green Seal, publish certification standards that define which attributes a product must have to receive their third-party approval. OHB participated in the development of cleaning product standards and successfully argued for the prohibition of ingredients known to cause allergic-type asthma.

In addition, these EcoLogo and Green Seal criteria cover other health-based attributes, such as toxicity and corrosivity limits and the prohibition of carcinogens, reproductive toxicants, and some endocrine disruptors. Here are their new and revised standards:

[Green Seal Standards](#) – see GS-52 (New), GS-53 (New), and GS-37 (Revised)

[EcoLogo Standard](#) – see CCD-146 (Revised)

View full announcement: [Certification standards help employers buy safer cleaning products \(PDF\)](#)

For more on information on our work in this area, see [Work-related Asthma Prevention Program](#)

OHB is dedicated to improving worker health and safety through prevention activities. We gather information on job hazards, work with others to test new approaches to prevent worker injury and illness, and assist with making changes at the workplace. For more information, visit the [OHB website](#) ([www.cdph.ca.gov/ohb](http://www.cdph.ca.gov/ohb)).

For future Occupational Health Watch updates: [Subscribe](#) or [Unsubscribe](#) E-mail [OHW@cdph.ca.gov](mailto:OHW@cdph.ca.gov) with feedback about this update or change of address.

