

## Alternatives to Toxic Cleaning Products

*And some GREAT reasons for using eco-friendly products for cleaning!*

*– By Crystal Marker, Parking Services Division*

How much time, on average, would you say you spend cleaning? According to an article on Distractify.com, as of 2014 the average person could spend 1.1 YEARS CLEANING in their lifetime! Yikes! That's a full year's worth of exposure to harsh chemicals – unless, of course, you follow these simple steps to avoid exposing yourself and the planet to toxic materials.

### Did you know?:

- Toxic chemicals are sent into our water and air supply when you do unavoidable daily things like: wash your clothes, flush the toilet, spray clean your counter-tops, and do the dishes.
- Combining the wrong cleaning products can result in chemical reactions that release dangerous gases. Similarly, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, chlorine bleach poisoned 14,400 children under age 6 in 2007.
- Fragrances added to many cleaners, most notably laundry detergents and fabric softeners, may cause acute health effects such as respiratory irritation, headache, sneezing, and watery eyes in sensitive individuals or allergy and asthma sufferers.
- The alkylphenol ethoxylates (APEs) used in some detergents and cleaners have been shown to mimic the hormone estrogen; one APE, p-nonylphenol, has caused estrogen-sensitive breast cancer cells to multiply in a test tube study.

**REDUCE YOUR USE OF HAZARDOUS PRODUCTS**

You don't need harsh, toxic cleaning products to clean your home or office. Baking soda is a good all-purpose cleaner and vinegar can make your windows and mirrors sparkle. Look for less toxic or non-toxic products when you shop. Or create your own less toxic cleaning recipes.

For this ....	Try this ...
General household cleaner	Mix 1 tsp. liquid soap, 1 tsp. borax or baking soda, dash of lemon juice or white vinegar with 1 quart warm water.
Drain cleaner	For minor clogs, pour ½ cup of baking soda down the drain followed by ½ cup of white vinegar; wait 5 minutes and follow with a kettle of boiling water. For serious clogs use a plunger or a metal snake.
Oven cleaner	As a preventive measure, line the bottom of your oven with foil. To clean, use baking soda, soap and water with a copper scrubber.
Window cleaner	Mix ¼ cup of white vinegar and 1 qt. of warm water. Use a squeegee for best results.
Toilet bowl cleaner	Pour ½ cup of baking soda into bowl, let sit for an hour or so and scrub.

For more information on safer alternatives to hazardous household products go to <http://zerowastemarin.org/zero-waste-101/less-toxic-alternatives>

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### What you can do:

- Use [non-toxic cleaning products](#) such as vinegar, baking soda, and borax. They are just as effective and are safe for the environment and for use around the house!
- Follow [less toxic cleaning product recipes](#) for specific uses around the house and office. They are very inexpensive and you can even add essential oils to make them smell good.
- If you still prefer to purchase cleaning products, find a product that is trusted as environmentally safe. Websites like [www.ewg.org](http://www.ewg.org) have a list of suggested items.
- Properly dispose of any toxic items you may have still lurking around the house. Visit your local [Household Hazardous Waste Facility](#) to dispose of unwanted household cleaners and other hazardous items.

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