



# ON THE AIR

Spring  
2009

A Newsletter about  
Clean Air. Provided  
by Spokane Regional  
Clean Air Agency.

## “Green” Spring Cleaning Do’s

It’s that time of year for us to clean closets, scrub floors, paint walls, plant flowers and dust, dust, dust—only to dust even more after the pollen has flung itself inside your home.

As you tackle the job of cleaning house and preparing for summer, consider the ways you can protect the environment and promote healthy, clean air. By considering the effects on the environment, you often save time and money as well.

### Clean It Out!

- Eliminate junk mail to save time, stay organized and remove excess clutter. Visit the Direct Marketing Association website at [www.dma-choice.org](http://www.dma-choice.org) to remove your name from lists.
- Read the news or magazines online or in a library to reduce paper.
- Reuse as many items as possible—it’s amazing what you can create out of an old t-shirt or used yogurt container.
- Donate or sell items you don’t use anymore.
- Recycle everything you can. If you are unsure what can be recycled locally, call the Recycling Hotline at 625-6800.

### Scrub it Down!

- Avoid phosphates, especially bleach. Bleach is more toxic than we realize.
- Buy concentrates—diluting the products yourself saves on packaging and guess what, it saves you money! Be sure to use the directed dilution rates.
- Check all labels—it matters. Look for items marked as “green cleaning” and avoid products with a poisonous or warning label. There are plenty of “non-toxic” products that are safer for cleaning a home.
- Wear gloves—regardless of what you are cleaning with. Any product that “cleans” is going to be harsh on your hands.
- Try making your own cleaning products. Common ingredients include liquid castile soap, vinegar, baking soda, mineral oil and lemon juice. See side bar for recipes.
- Use reusable tools, such as traditional mops instead of disposable mops, fabric towels instead of paper towels, and lint free wash rags instead of newspaper.

## “Green Clean” Recipes

### All-Purpose Cleaner (Fantastic Cleaner)

1/2 tsp washing soda\*  
2 tsp Borax  
1/2 tsp liquid soap or detergent  
2 cups hot water  
Combine washing soda, borax, and soap in a spray bottle. Pour the hot water (it will dissolve the minerals) into the bottle, replace lid, and shake to completely blend and dissolve. Spritz the surface, wiping off the cleanser with a rag as you go. For tough dirt, leave on for a few minutes before wiping off. Shake the bottle prior to each use.  
*\*washing soda is more alkaline than baking soda. It releases no harmful fumes and is far safer than a commercial solvent formula. Wear gloves when using as it is caustic. Washing soda cuts grease, removes wax, and neutralizes odors.*

### Floor Cleaner w/ Fragrant Herbs

This recipe is great because it rids the house of the stale smell of winter.  
1/8 cup liquid soap or detergent  
1/4 to 1/2 cup white distilled vinegar or lemon juice  
1/2 cup fragrant herb tea (peppermint is great and adds antibacterial qualities).  
Combine ingredients in a bucket. Swirl the water around until it’s sudsy. Scrub floor with mop or rag.

*These recipes are reprinted with permission from Living Green with SNAP—Spokane Neighborhood Action Program. More tips on living green are available by calling SNAP at 744-3370, extension 242.*

Continued on page 3

## Asbestos Rules & Renovation

As the weather warms up, you may be ready to tackle those remodeling projects you've had in mind all winter. One item that often gets overlooked is the need to perform an asbestos survey to ensure that asbestos-containing materials are not damaged or disturbed during the project. Spokane Clean Air staff are available to help you understand asbestos requirements which apply to both residential and commercial remodeling, renovation and demolition projects.

### **What is asbestos, and why is it harmful?**

Asbestos is a naturally-occurring mineral used in over 3,000 building materials for its durability and

intrinsic fireproofing characteristics. Asbestos is still used today in some products.

When asbestos-containing products are damaged or disturbed, microscopic asbestos fibers are released into the air, creating a potentially hazardous situation. Exposure to asbestos has been linked to cancer and other respiratory diseases.

### **What materials contain asbestos?**

Some of the more common building materials that may contain asbestos are cement board siding, furnace insulation, vinyl sheet flooring (linoleum), vinyl floor tile, joint compound, blown-in insulation,



“popcorn” ceiling texture and roofing materials, just to name a few.

### **What should I do?**

Call Spokane Clean Air at 477-4727 prior to starting any renovation or demolition project at your residence or business. Agency staff will provide you with information to help you avoid disturbing asbestos and potentially creating a hazardous situation.

## Compact Fluorescent Lights...*Safe disposal tips*

Compact Fluorescent Lights (CFLs) have become a popular item for consumers who want to protect the environment and save on electricity bills. They serve both purposes

because they use only about a quarter of the energy required to power an incandescent bulb. However, questions are beginning to crop up about the environmental benefit and safety of CFLs because they contain



mercury, a neurotoxin which can be harmful to humans and animals.

However, using CFLs instead of incandescent bulbs will actually reduce the overall amount of mercury in our air, if the CFLs are disposed of properly. The highest producers of mercury in the United States are coal powered plants. More energy is required by these plants to power incandescent bulbs than CFLs; therefore using CFLs will reduce

the mercury produced. Although we don't have coal-fired power plants in our area, reducing our electrical usage could enable the Northwest to export more clean energy. By choosing to purchase CFLs, consumers are making a positive choice for the environment, so long as they take seriously the responsibility to properly recycle the bulbs.

What consumers must keep in mind is that purchasing and using CFLs in place of incandescent bulbs is only part of the process. How and where to dispose of CFLs safely is the key. Bulbs often end up where they don't belong: in the trash or with recycled items.

While CFLs contain only 4 mg of mercury (versus 500 mg in an average mercury thermometer), they require special treatment. If the bulbs break in the trash or with recyclables, they can contaminate the recycled

material, as well as our air, soil and water. The problem multiplies over time when consumers unknowingly or carelessly throw hundreds of CFLs away. The concern is serious, as it only takes one drop of mercury to contaminate 7,000 gallons of water, according to Spokane Regional Solid Waste System.

To avoid the danger of contamination, place used bulbs in sealable plastic bags and take them to one of the following locations for safe, free disposal: Home Depot, the Household Hazardous Waste section at System Transfer Stations or the Waste to Energy Facility. Du-Mor Recycling and Earthworks Recycling also offer disposal of CFLs for a fee. For more information, including transfer station locations and hours, call the Recycling Hotline at 625-6800.

For information about safely cleaning up a broken CFL bulb, go to [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov) and search CFL cleanup.

*by Ninita Sporseen, Student Intern*

## Spring Cleaning

*Continued from cover*

### Fix it Up!

- Check if windows and doors are well-sealed with no leaks. Use caulking and weather-stripping to minimize energy loss.
- Make sure your home is properly insulated, including your hot water heater. Call Avista to get a home energy audit. Insulating and eliminating leaks can result in substantial savings on your utility bills.
- Invest in renewable energy, such as solar panels.
- When remodeling, only buy products you really need and choose items with minimal packaging. Consider used or slightly damaged products at second hand stores.
- Buy products with the Energy Star® logo—they are more efficient and some offer tax benefits as well.
- Don't overlook tasks that require extra effort. For instance, vacuuming refrigerator coils and replacing old refrigerator seals can make your home more energy efficient and save you money in the long run.
- Add attic insulation to save 20-30% of heating energy and 15% of air conditioning energy according to the U.S. Department of Energy.

*By Nita Sporseen, Student Intern and Simone Ramel, Communications Specialist*

## Air Quality Monitoring On The Move

Now that the staff at Spokane Clean Air has settled into the new Augusta Avenue location, some of the analyzers used to monitor the air are being relocated as well.

On March 27, air quality monitors were relocated from the Freya and Ferry Street location to the rooftop of Spokane Clean Air's office building located at 3104 E. Augusta Avenue.

Each monitor is designed to measure a specific pollutant within specific parameters. Pollutants measured include coarse and fine particles, ozone, nitrogen oxide, hydrocarbons and black carbon (soot).

Measuring black carbon is a new effort by Spokane Clean Air.

"Black carbon is a known toxin and it is the second leading cause of global warming," according to Mark Rowe, Air Quality Monitoring Technician for Spokane Clean Air.

"We are measuring black carbon to assess the degree to which combustion sources (e.g. wood burning, diesel engines, etc.) contribute to our fine particle pollution," added Rowe.

Air quality data from the monitoring network are submitted to state and federal agencies and are used by Spokane Clean Air to report current and forecasted air quality to the public. The pollution readings are also used by Spokane Clean Air staff, along with meteorological data, to issue seasonal burn bans on wood heating. Issuing a burn ban is a tool to be used when deemed necessary to keep air quality within federally-mandated levels.

The Current Air Quality page at



### Air Quality Monitoring Locations

#### City of Spokane

Monroe St & Wellesley Ave  
Monroe St & College Ave  
Augusta Ave & Fiske St  
Washington St & Third Ave

#### City of Spokane Valley

Broadway Ave near University

#### City of Airway Heights

W. 12th near S. Lawson

#### City of Deer Park

E. "A" street near Main Ave

#### Town of Liberty Lake

E. Valleyway near Molter Rd

#### Spokane County

Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge  
Greenbluff

[www.spokanecleanair.org](http://www.spokanecleanair.org) provides current air quality information, as well as links to other air quality reports. Daily air quality reports are also emailed to subscribers. If you'd like to subscribe to this free email notification service, sign-up on the agency's website.

For more information about air quality monitoring, call us at 477-4727.

*By Nita Sporseen, Student Intern*

◆ AIR QUALITY CALENDAR ◆

- June 4: Board of Directors meeting, 9 a.m., Spokane Clean Air office, 3104 E. Augusta Ave. Agendas are posted at [www.spokanecleanair.org](http://www.spokanecleanair.org).
- July: **Mow Down Air Pollution** promotion. Summer is just around the corner. You can enter-to-win electric and manual powered yard equipment to keep our summer skies clean and healthy. Check out our website for details coming in June.

If you would like air quality information sent directly to you via email, sign up for our free email notifications at [www.spokanecleanair.org](http://www.spokanecleanair.org).

## Ross Printing: 2009 Clean Air Award

Ross Printing, Spokane's oldest family-owned printing company, was recently presented with the 2009 Clean Air Award by Spokane Clean Air.

Located in Spokane's historic East Sprague business district, Ross Printing has been a family-owned operation since opening its doors in 1917. The company provides digital, flexo, and litho printing to customers in the Inland Northwest and across the United States.

The company has found that green business initiatives often overlap with printing industry best practices. In 2008, Ross Printing implemented two major pollution prevention upgrades in an effort to conserve energy, while reducing air emissions and hazardous waste. The company installed a new, solvent-free flexographic plate setter—a plate making system that combines the environmental and productivity benefits

of thermal processing technology with the print quality and efficiency that the digital workflow has to offer. There will be a 100% reduction in VOCs by using this new process, compared to the traditional solvent wash process.

Going green isn't just about cost savings. "We know this issue is important to our customers as well," said Benjamin Ross, Sales Manager for Ross Printing. "We're seeing more customers ask about papers made from 100% post-consumer material and we're very excited to be able to meet that demand. We want people to know we're thinking about these things," he added. "When we evaluate a new or existing process, one of the questions we're asking is whether there is a green alternative and whether we can make it work for us. We take sustainability very seriously."

## Take Note!

*On the Air* is a publication of the Spokane Regional Clean Air Agency. Its purpose is to inform local residents on all aspects of outdoor air pollution. Please contact Lisa Woodard, Editor, with comments or story ideas:  
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### Board of Directors:

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- Ed "Chuck" Crockett, Small Cities and Towns Representative
- Rose Dempsey, City of Spokane Valley
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