



CLEANLINESS FACTS

TIPS AND TRENDS FROM THE SOAP AND DETERGENT ASSOCIATION

475 Park Avenue South New York, New York 10016

CLEANING PRODUCT DISPOSAL SDA Studies Consumer Practices

Because of the wide interest in waste disposal issues, The Soap and Detergent Association commissioned a study conducted by the NPD Group, Inc., to determine whether or not consumers dispose of unused cleaning products. The research was designed to find out to what extent the products themselves, not the packages, were being disposed.

A full-page questionnaire was sent to a nationally representative sample of 20,000 households, utilizing the NPD monthly consumer omnibus panel. Products were grouped into three general categories: laundry products, dishwashing products and household (hard surface) cleaners.

Only 8% of consumers responding to this survey had disposed of unused cleaning products within the past three months. This is not surprising. Cleaning products provide recognized benefits, are used frequently and have long shelf lives. Most consumers see the value of using them up.

By product category, only 3.5% of the consumers surveyed had disposed of a laundry product; only 2.7% disposed of a dishwashing product and only 4.9% disposed of a household cleaner.

Renters are significantly more likely to have disposed of products than those who own their own homes. Although not surveyed by the study, this may be due to the fact that renters move more frequently than homeowners.

The study also found that younger people are significantly more likely to have disposed of products than are older people. There was no difference in frequency of product disposal between households connected to septic tank systems and those on municipal sewer systems.

There were some regional differences, with households in the South significantly more likely to

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dispose of unused product than those in the Central or West regions. Households in the East disposed of products at a slightly higher rate than those in the Central or West regions.

If it's necessary to dispose of a cleaning product, The Soap and Detergent Association recommends giving it away to a friend or neighbor. If this is not possible, then dispose of it in an appropriate manner. The reproducible master on the following page gives the steps to proper use and disposal of household cleaning products. Follow these steps for the environmentally smart way of using and disposing of household cleaning products. ■



SDA



"WHAT CAN I DO?"

A guide to using household cleaning products – the environmentally-smart way

It's all about doing what's best for the environment. And one area where *each* of us can do our part is in the way we purchase, use and dispose of household cleaning products.

So think it through—and you'll soon be an expert in "WHAT YOU CAN DO"!



1

Before you buy...

- Think about the cleaning job at hand.
- **Read product labels.**
- Choose the product that is best for your job.
- Buy only what you can use.



5

When you dispose of the containers...

- Empty any unused product (see #4).
- Refer to local guidelines for recycling:
Plastics
Paperboard
Aerosol Cans



2

Before you use...

- **Read the label** and follow directions for proper use.
- Use the recommended amount. More is not necessarily better!

The key to smart use is **reading the label!**



3

After you use...

- **Read the label** and follow directions for proper storage.
- Keep lid tightly closed. If there is a child-resistant closure, use it!
- Keep product in original container with readable labels.
- Use it up, or share with a friend or neighbor.



4

If you must dispose of a product...

- **Follow label directions** if provided.
- If there are no directions:
 - Most water-soluble cleaning products can be poured down the drain with running water.
 - If in doubt, call the manufacturer's toll-free number (or write to them) or check with your local waste disposal facility.



AUTOMATIC DISHWASHERS

How They Work

While the automatic dishwasher may appear to be a thoroughly modern appliance, it was actually invented almost 150 years ago. The first patent for a mechanical dishwasher was issued in 1850. However, explains The Soap and Detergent Association, several factors inhibited its development. The lack of electricity and hot, running water in many homes meant that the original patent was ahead of its time. Lack of a suitable detergent was another. The automatic timers that provide wash cycles were introduced to dishwashers in the mid-1940s. In the 1950s, new formulations resulted in dishwasher detergents with lower foam characteristics. This prevented excess sudsing which can inhibit the cleaning action of the machine.

Today's automatic dishwasher owes its cleaning power to the ability to constantly spray items with a mixture of hot water and detergent. This spray arm system means more efficient wash action, even in hard-to-reach corners. The original circular racks have been abandoned in favor of capacity-increasing square racks.

The wash cycle consists of a series of water fills, each using about 2.5 gallons of water. At the beginning of the cycle, water pumped through the spray arms at a high velocity strips food soils from the dish load. This water drains from the dishes and flows through the soil removal system, which consists of filters, food grinders or a combination of both. Once the food soils are removed from the water, clean water is returned to the pump and sprayed over the dish load again. The spraying, draining and soil removal process continues for each wash and rinse fill of the selected cycle. At the end of each wash or rinse cycle, water and soil are drained from the dishwasher. Depending on the wash cycle, the dishwasher may have several water changes. Some rinse-hold cycles require only one water change, while some heavy duty wash cycles require as many as six changes.

Some dishwasher drying cycles use a heating element; others use an air dry method. At either setting, the dishwasher may utilize natural air circulation or fan circulated air. ■

AUTOMATIC DISHWASHERS

Getting Great Results

Obtaining the best results from an automatic dishwasher begins with the water that enters the appliance. Dishwasher detergent is designed to work best in hot (140°F) water. Water that is hotter can lead to etching. Water that is cooler can cause hard water filming and poor cleaning results.

To check the water temperature, run water in the sink nearest the dishwasher until it's hot, then use a candy thermometer to test the temperature of the running water. If the water temperature is too low, increase the water heater setting. Many newer dishwashers offer the option of heating the water in the dishwasher, which allows the house's main water heater to be set at a lower temperature. If the temperature is too high, lower the water heater setting and do not use the dishwasher's water heating option.

The hardness of the water will affect the amount of detergent to use. There are many ways to determine this hardness. Check with the local utility or water company. Cooperative Extension offices may also have this information available. If the hardness is 7 to 12 grains/gallon, use extra detergent. If water hardness is greater than 12 grains/gallon, consider installing a water softener.

Scrape or wipe food and bones from the dishes. Load the unrinsed dishes following the dishwasher manufacturer's instructions. Avoid nesting, overlapping or double stacking items. Alternate fork and spoon handles up and down so they do not fit tightly or stack together. Use a detergent specifically designed for automatic dishwashers. Consult the dishwasher manufacturer's instructions and the detergent label to determine the proper amount. Too little detergent can cause soil deposit on dishes, lingering food odors, spotting and filming. Too much detergent may cause detergent residue, fading and etching.

Finally, a rinse agent can help minimize spotting and filming. It can also speed up the drying process by causing water to sheet off dishes and glassware. If there is an automatic rinse agent dispenser, fill it with a liquid rinse agent. If not, consider using a solid rinse agent. ■





MISCELLANY

Old Is News

In home furnishings textiles, the newest look is anything with an antique persona, reports The Soap and Detergent Association. The rage for vintage has taken hold in almost every major style category, including casual, country, ethnic and formal. And just about every mill is adding either single patterns or an entire collection of fabrics built around dusky rose, murky brown and weathered greens.

Damasks, Jacobean prints, crewel-work motifs, faux candlewick, and traditional florals with a botanical twist have an aged, weathered quality. Chenilles, brushed cottons, velvets and tapestries have a worn look that belies their recent roots. Vintage florals come texturized with companion stripes and plaids on Old World backgrounds. Washed fabrics have crossed the line from fashion trend to fabric staple, showing up in everything from jacquards to damasks to brushed cottons.

Refrigerators on the Move

The refrigerator, once thought to be a kitchen-only appliance, is making its way to other parts of the house, observes The Soap and Detergent Association. As convenience takes precedence, mini-fridges are showing up in dens, patios, bedrooms and offices. Undercounter units are engineered for maximum capacity and quieter operation. Several upscale appliance manufacturers are offering small modular units that can be bunched together or spread out all over the kitchen. They can even go their separate ways in other rooms in the house.

Trends in in-kitchen refrigerators include free-standing units that give the appearance of a built-in. Because many homes feature an open floor plan with the kitchen fully on view, stylish appliances are becoming more important. One wave of the future may be stainless steel refrigerators to blend with commercial-style cooking appliances. Other trends include half shelves, movable bins and clear-white interiors.

Trends in Major Appliances

Delux features are the wave of the future in major appliances. This trend is reflected in everything from dishwashers to wall ovens, notes The Soap and Detergent Association.

One manufacture is demonstrating prototypes of voice activated wall ovens, refrigerators, dishwashers and laundry appliances. The projected available date for consumers is early 1996.

Other innovations, such as commercial styling and quieter operation, are available now. Dishwashers lead the way in sensor-activated appliances. These sensors can do everything from adjusting the amount of washing time to issuing a warning if a dish falls out of place. Refrigerator options focus on flexible space. Desired features include fold-down shelves and moveable storage bins. Many units are completely free of chlorofluorocarbons - an option that is particularly appealing to environmentally conscious consumers. Other news includes a self-cleaning electric convection oven, a wall oven with mirror-like doors and slimmer (24" deep) range tops.

Safety Tips for Automatic Dishwashers

Like any other household appliance, an improperly used dishwasher can be a potential hazard. To help avoid accidents, The Soap and Detergent Association urges consumers to take the following precautions.

Load sharp items last, placing them so points or sharp edges are not in a position to injure the user or damage the dishwasher. Use only detergents and rinse additives recommended for dishwasher use. After a cycle, wait until the heating element has cooled for at least 20 minutes before reaching into the area below the bottom rack.

Take special precautions with young children. Do not store dishwasher detergent within their reach. Do not let them operate or play with a dishwasher or leave them unattended near an operating unit.

Never operate a dishwasher that is not working properly, has missing parts or does not have all the panels in place. And, never use a dishwasher to cook or "steam" food. It is unsanitary and may cause unpleasant stains and odors in the dishwasher. ■

WHAT'S NEW?

Cut recycling clutter down to size with The Scavenger. This four-in-one tool includes a hook blade for slicing oversized plastic containers into bin-size bits, plus a straight blade for cutting cardboard, a label scraper and a magnet to test for tin. Everything is conveniently built into its easy-grip handle.

(The Bitterroot Co.; 1500 Mt. Kemble Avenue; Morristown, NJ 07960)

Remodeling a kitchen or bath? "how to" help is at your fingertips with the Kohler Coordinates Kit. Included are a design guide that features 10 kitchen and bath design themes, an advice-filled video, a space planning workbook, and a computer program to help create the perfect floor plan. Via an 800 number, kit owners also have access to information and advice from the Kohler Coordinates partners.

(Kohler Coordinates Kit; 1-800-772-1814, Dept. PR2)

Dark nights are looking brighter with new versions of the Limelite electroluminescent night light. Options include: Dimmer Switch Limelite which gently glows in the dark when other lights are off; SideLite Limelite, a combination electrical outlet and night light; and Power Fail Limelite with a backup battery for power outages. The NiteNite version is specially styled for children's rooms. (Austin Innovations, Inc.; 2600 McHale Court #140; Austin, TX 78758)

Football fans who crave cool drinks have something to cheer about. Fun Mugs are refreezable, frosty mugs featuring the logos of each of the 30 NFL teams. Drinks stay cold without ice. Available in 16 oz. mug or 12 oz. tumbler sizes, Fun Mugs are the perfect accompaniment to tailgate parties or armchair viewing. (Duck House; 2117 Pointe Avenue; Ontario, CA 91761)■

----- **SDA ORDER FORM** -----

Up to 50 copies free. Call or write for large quantities.

What Can I Do?: An eight-page brochure on the environmentally smart way of using and disposing of household cleaning products. For community educators and consumers.

Source Reduction: An eight-page brochure that highlights industry efforts and consumer opportunities to help safeguard the environment by stopping waste before it starts. The brochure also features information on why source reduction is important and a glossary of key terms. For adults and high school students.

Recycle It!: A six-page brochure on recycling plastic cleaning product bottles. Includes a glossary of recycling terms and guidelines on preparing bottles for recycling. For adults and high school students.

Please send: _____ *What Can I Do With It?* _____ *Source Reduction* _____ *Recycle It!*

Name _____ Title _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____
 _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail or FAX order to: CLF Brochures; The Soap and Detergent Association
 475 Park Avenue South; New York, NY 10016
 FAX: 212-213-0685; Phone: 212-725-1262 X221



"KEEP IT CLEAN" BRIEFS

Bright or fluorescent-colored fabrics may be more prone to color loss or color bleeding. Instructions on the care label will offer a clue. Wording such as "wash separately" or "wash in cool water" may be an indication that the garment is not colorfast. If pretreating a stain on such a garment, first test the product by applying it on an inconspicuous area. Then, rinse it out. If the fabric color does not change or run, it is safe to wash the garment or use the pretreat product.

Treat the garment just before washing. Do not let the pretreat product sit on the garment for more than a few minutes before washing.

Dusting furniture with a dry cloth can eventually scratch the finish and dull the finish. To help prevent abrasion damage, dust with a polish-moistened cloth. Also, vacuum carefully to avoid nicking furniture and don't slide accessories across furniture.

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The Soap and Detergent Association
475 Park Avenue South
New York, New York 10016

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Hard water can cause a soap film in the bathtub. To prevent this "bathtub ring," use a small amount of water softener in the bath water. Or, after every bath, wipe down the sides of the tub with a sponge and a tub/tile/sink or all-purpose cleaner.

Do not use fabric softeners on sports underwear designed to wick moisture away from the body. This underwear is usually made of polyester and lycra and is used by skiers and other athletes.

The fabric softener can absorb on the surface of the fabric, causing it to lose its ability to keep moisture away from the body.

Dirt and grit can scratch and dull the finish of no-wax vinyl flooring. To prevent dulling, clean the floor often. A floor polish will help protect the vinyl and fill in scratches. ■

