



NEW Requirements For Zinc Floor Finish Disposal in the Cities of Palo Alto and Mountain View

The concern with zinc floor finishes

San Francisco Bay zinc levels have led to new requirements regarding zinc-containing floor product use and resulting waste water disposal.

The Palo Alto Regional Water Quality Control Plant (RWQCP) which services five peninsula cities is concerned about zinc in its effluent to San Francisco Bay. In response, the Cities of Palo Alto and Mountain View each recently adopted municipal code revisions to address zinc-containing floor finish products.

Zinc is often used in floor finishes because it increases durability, especially in sites where frequent cleanings are required. Zinc-containing floor finishes contain as much as 5000 parts per million (ppm) zinc. Wastewater resulting from stripping of zinc-containing floor finishes has been found to contain as much as 500 ppm zinc. Wastewater put into the sewer must contain 2 ppm or less.

Municipal Code Sections 16.09.105 (Palo Alto) and 35.32.12.3(Q) (Mountain View) prohibit the discharge of zinc-containing floor finishes, or wastewater from stripping of zinc-containing floor finishes, to the sanitary sewer. Companies that continue to use zinc-containing floor finishes will need to arrange for collection and disposal of excess floor finish and stripper wastewater with a hazardous waste disposal contractor.

Fortunately, zinc-free floor finishes are available which perform essentially as well as zinc-based products. To avoid costly disposal of hazardous waste, the City recommends that custodial and janitorial businesses consider the use of zinc-free floor finishes in their operations.

Highlights

- Government and businesses need to work together to reduce the levels of zinc entering the sewer system and subsequently San Francisco Bay.
- Because floor finish and used stripper solution contain high zinc levels, a new sewer ordinance prohibits discharging them into the sewer.
- Palo Alto now uses zinc-free floor finish in all City buildings. Custodial and janitorial businesses are encouraged to do the same in the facilities they service.

Tips For Successfully Transitioning To A Zinc-Free Floor Finish

- Involve technical people from the supplier before and during the floor finish test
- Thoroughly prepare the floor surface at the start of the test.
- Pay attention to both physical and chemical incompatibilities that may exist between the old and new finish.
- Right-tool-for-the-right-job: use equipment suitable for the floor stripping and finishing process, and for the specific chemicals that are used.
- Allow sufficient time to test the product, and test it in several places to have meaningful measures of product effectiveness.
- Adapt and/or increase the routine floor surface maintenance schedule as needed.

Zinc-Free Floor Finish Suppliers

(not intended to be a comprehensive list of suppliers)

Spartan Chemical - Glacier

Contact : Richard Smoker or John Schauff

1110 Spartan Drive

Maumee, Ohio 43537

www.spartanchemical.com

800.537.8990

fx: 419.536.8423

The Clean Environment Company

Contact: Don Eby

P.O. Box 4444

Lincoln, NE 68504

www.safegreenclean.com/index.htm

800. 266.2353

402. 464.0988

fx: 402.464.1175

Surtec, Inc

Contact: Kurt Grannis

29334 Pacific Street

Hayward, CA 94544

www.surtecsystem.com

800.877.6330

fx (product orders):209.820.3792

Hillyard - Strong Guard, One Plus, Hil-Tex+ Guardian/Hillyard

Contact: Dan Terrill

12960 Oddstad Place

Redwood City, CA 94063

www.hillyard.com/pw.htm

800.255.5326

650.365.8000

fx: 650.365.5730

National Sanitary Supply - Xstatic & SCJZF-1500

Contact: Brian Jardarian

866 Malcolm Road-F

Burlingame, CA 94010

www.jwp.com

650.697.6321

fx: 650.697.6309

The City of Palo Alto's Transition to Zinc-Free Floor Finish

To streamline the process of switching to a new floor finish, the City of Palo Alto tested a zinc-free floor product recommended by Hillyard, its current supplier. The new floor finish (Hillyard, One Plus®) performed well in these tests, so all City facility floors were stripped and re-finished with this zinc-free floor product. The zinc-free sealer is Hillary Hil-Tex®+. Product cost is same although one additional initial coat is recommended. Due to the softer finish, maintenance spray buffing increased by 25% to maintain the constant high-level floor finish at the same level.

For more information, contact Brad Eggleston at the Regional Water Quality Control Plant: 650.329.2104, or brad.eggleston@cityofpaloalto.org