

Can Disinfectants Really Be “Green?”

By Randy Cusick, Product Manager



There are currently several companies and/or individuals touting “Green Disinfectants.” The question is, can disinfectants really be called green? According to The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the answer is no. The EPA currently prohibits manufacturers or distributors from labeling or marketing disinfectants or sanitizers as green. This policy is based on the EPA’s determination that Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) registration is sufficient assurance of a product’s safety and effectiveness and that any additional claims may be misleading.

Since all disinfectants must be certified through the EPA, and they will not currently allow products to be labeled or marketed as “green,” we can’t really call any disinfectant “Green.” However, disinfection is still a very important part of any cleaning program, including a green cleaning program. Disinfecting highly touched surfaces like water fountains, faucets, and door knobs, is critical.

So, how do we determine which disinfectant is the right one to use in our green cleaning program? Consider the following when choosing a safe, environmentally preferred product to meet your needs.

- **The disinfectant must be EPA registered** – This shows that the product has been tested and will work as advertised.
- **pH should be as close to neutral as possible** – Disinfectants that are too acidic or alkaline are not as safe as those close to neutral on the pH scale.
- **Low HMIS ratings** - The Hazardous Material Identification System on the Safety Data Sheets can provide a lot of help. The higher the number on the HIMS rating, the less safe the product. Try to pick those that have an HMIS of 1 or 0.
- **Ingredients** – Some ingredients such as phenolic compounds are not as safe to use. Other ingredients like phosphates, ammonia, butyl, chlorine bleach, hydrochloric acid, and phosphoric acid can be harmful. Some ingredients, like silver, which may seem safer to use, can cause other environmental issues such as the heavy metal buildup.

Hillyard recommends using Re-Juv-Nal as part of your everyday disinfection program. Re-Juv-Nal uses a neutral formula to effectively and safely disinfect highly touched areas.

[More Info on Re-Juv-Nal](#)