

EPA Announces Strengthening the Safer Choice and Design for the Environment Standard for Commercial and Household Cleaning Products

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On August 8, 2024, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency [announced](#) that it made updates to strengthen the Safer Choice and Design for the Environment (DfE) Standard, which identifies the requirements that products and their ingredients must meet to earn EPA's Safer Choice label or DfE logo. EPA states these updates strengthen the criteria that products must meet to qualify for the voluntary Safer Choice label, supporting the use of safer chemicals in the marketplace.

According to EPA, the Safer Choice program was implemented so consumers and purchasers for facilities like schools and office buildings could find cleaners, detergents, and other products made with safer chemical ingredients. It encourages use of chemicals that meet EPA's stringent criteria for human health and the environment and provides opportunities for companies to differentiate their products in the marketplace with the Safer Choice label.

Similarly, the DfE program assists consumers to find antimicrobial products that meet high standards for public health and the environment. It assists consumers to identify antimicrobial products like disinfectants that meet the health and safety standards of the normal pesticide registration process required by the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA), as well as meeting the Safer Choice and DfE Standard.

In addition to updated clarifying language, the final updated Standard includes:

- A new certification program for cleaning service providers that use Safer Choice- and DfE-certified products. The Cleaning Service Certification logo is available for organizations and businesses that use cleaners, detergents, disinfectants, and related products as part of their primary operations. The logo distinguishes cleaning service providers who use Safer Choice-certified products for cleaning and DfE-certified products for disinfection either exclusively or to the maximum extent practicable.
- Strengthened criteria that pet care products must meet to ensure they use only the safest possible ingredients for humans, pets, and the environment.
- Updated safer packaging criteria, ensuring primary packaging does not include any

unintentionally added per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) or other chemicals of concern.

- Strengthened sustainable packaging requirements for all Safer Choice-certified products to use post-consumer recycled content and be recyclable or reusable.
- Updated criteria for wipe products to ensure certified wipes contain “Do Not Flush” language to help reduce damage to wastewater treatment systems.
- New, optional energy efficiency or use reduction criteria to encourage companies to use less water, use renewable energy, and improve energy efficiency.

This update follows a [November 2023](#) request for public comment on EPA's proposed updates to the Standard. This is EPA's fourth update of the Standard since its inception in 2009 and the first since 2015. EPA states it periodically updates the Standard to keep current with the state of scientific and technological innovation, increase transparency and reduce redundancy, and expand the scope of the program as appropriate.

The updated Standard is available [here](#).

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