

## Green Your Routine

By Susan Patel

August 10, 2010

I was watching clips of the *Today Show* a few days ago and found a segment titled "Green Your Routine," which brought attention to green cleaning products.

It got me thinking: why isn't there a law or regulation requiring manufacturers to list ingredients? Not knowing what chemicals are in products can be dangerous. You don't know what you're using and how it could destroy our immune system, cause cancer, lung disease, and death – a health and safety nightmare!

Companies are shockingly allowed to use general terms for chemicals such as "fragrance" or "preservatives." This wouldn't make the cut with the Food & Drug Administration, but apparently products we touch and breath aren't that important on the list. What we need is national regulation so that companies must disclose every ingredient in a product.

So, what are we to do? Warning labels are useful, first line of defense. But we need to start gradually creating a system that works for our well-being and us. We have to start somewhere, right? Why not with all of us – you!

At the frontline of the EcoGreenHotel Store, I'm on a mission to know exactly what we're selling. One form of verification I've become familiar with is the Green Seal, a third-party certifier. Of course there is also Ecologo, Environmental Choice and EPA's Design for the Environment Program that test products for effectiveness, besides health and environmental considerations. I wouldn't say one is better than the other since each is slightly different, however a certified product is better than none at all.

When hotels purchase products certified by Green Seal or any of the other eco-labels, they know that the products meet good standards and consumers aren't completely on their own. Still, some green cleaning products are not certified. There are several reasons for this: the product might be new on the market, the company that produces it has chosen not to pay the fee the certifying agencies charge to evaluate it, or that they didn't meet the criteria of that certifying organization.

When it comes to what we sell on EcoGreenHotel Store, we've made sure our green cleaning products are Green Seal certified. For example, the Proxi hydrogen peroxide multi-purpose cleaner, a versatile,

environmentally friendly cleaning product formulated with an active ingredient that is safer than aggressive acids and bleaches. Added bonus, due to its high concentration (dilute 1oz per quart water to make 128 quarts), it's actually saving you money too!

Aside from looking for a third-party certification, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) is another tool that helps hoteliers to make a well-informed decision. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) also has information about many toxic substances at [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp).

Next time you're purchasing your green cleaning products, make sure you know what chemicals are in the products you'll be using at your green hotel.