

Safer products



Choosing safer products for the workplace reduces employee's exposure to toxic chemicals. Toxic chemicals cause a wide range of health problems, including skin rashes, eye irritation, and headaches, as well as more serious complications like organ damage and an increased risk of cancer. These chemicals are found in a wide range of products you may encounter in your workplace – such as cleaners, degreasers, or certain solvents.

Many businesses in King County have chosen to switch to safer products to protect people and the environment. Below are a few easy ways to make the switch:

1 Opt for the Safer Choice label.



Safer Choice is an EPA-certified label that helps people identify safer products. These products are the safest in their class, having undergone rigorous product testing by the EPA. Every ingredient must meet strict safety criteria for both the environment and human health. Choosing items with the

Safer Choice label is a simple way to limit exposures and ensure employee and environmental health.

The Safer Choice label encompasses a wide range of products—from all-purpose cleaners, to pet care products, dish detergents and degreasers. Check out a searchable list of products at:

www.epa.gov/saferchoice/products.

2 Look out for signal words.

If choosing a product with the Safer Choice label is not possible, know how to identify signal words. Signal words are required on all hazardous products by federal law. They indicate the varying ways that a product may be harmful—whether corrosive, flammable, or toxic. Avoid products that have the words **CAUTION**, **WARNING**, **DANGER**, or **POISON** on their labels. If you aren't able to avoid these labels, choose products with only **CAUTION** or **WARNING** to reduce your risk.

3 Contact Business Services for a free assessment.

Business Services offers free technical assistance and trial products, advice on safer product options, and vouchers to help pay for safer products. Businesses may be reimbursed for 75% of their costs, or up to \$599.



Safer cleaning in the community: Property management at the Auburn Square Apartments

Property Manager Robin Dyer of the Auburn Square Apartments began working with the King County Housing Authority more than a decade ago. KCHA provides housing options for people with low incomes. Robin found herself using many different cleaners, laundry products, and detergents as an extension of her building management responsibilities. Robin felt a strong responsibility to her tenants, and it was not until the Hazardous Waste Management Program reached out to her in 2012, that Robin realized many of the products she came into contact with daily had environmental and health risks for her residents and staff.

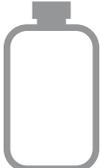
Robin benefited from a free on-site consultation from the Business Services team, which helped her assess the hazardous products she'd come into contact with and how to keep them out of stormwater drains and our environment. Business Services also helped her roll out this information to residents with flyers, educational programming, cleaning kits, and other supportive materials.

"I can see a difference in the health of the landscape. We have honeybees here, and all sorts of birds. I can see the difference it's making with my own eyes!"

Robin sees the difference in resident attitudes too. Establishing safe, environmentally friendly practices is important to the community of residents at Auburn Square. Robin now only uses EnviroStar contractors on site, and before COVID, regularly hosted recycling Olympics, an event to promote recycling best practices within the community.

"[The County] assessed what we're doing and showed us how we could be better," says Robin, who hopes to continue educating residents about safer product alternatives.

Label reading can help determine safer product options for the workplace

Safest 	Safe enough 	Somewhat harmful 	Most harmful – avoid 
Find a product with these logos on the front or back.	Read the product label. Product that does NOT have the words CAUTION, WARNING, DANGER or POISON.	Read the product label. Product with the words CAUTION or WARNING.	Read the product label. Product with the words DANGER & POISON. It is the most harmful for you and your family.
			



Employees from KCHA's property, Argyle Apartments, pose with their Safer Choice cleaner and free spill kit provided by Business Services. Argyle Apartments is an EnviroStars Certified Business.



Learn more

To learn more about the services you may qualify for as a business owner in King County, scan the QR code or visit our website at kingcountyhazwastewa.gov.