

3.4.2 Garment Cleaning: Wet Cleaning

Tip Sheet #1

WASTE ORIGIN: Wet-to-Dry or Dry-to-Dry Cleaning Processes

WASTE TYPES: Perchloroethylene and other Petroleum-based Solvents

WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING METHODS:

- ! Some state and national government agencies may provide information on **grant and loan programs** to install and operate wet cleaning equipment.
- ! **Wet cleaning** eliminates harmful chemicals. Customer and worker health risks are eliminated, in addition to liability costs of environmental contamination.
- ! Contact wet cleaning **demonstration programs** for free information on financial and technical advantages of this safe cleaning alternative:
 - ! **Center for Neighborhood Technology** in Chicago promotes wet cleaning technology through its “Greener Cleaner” demonstration project. This includes:
 - ! Wet cleaning *workshops*, wet cleaning research newsletter;
 - ! Results from program *tests* on cleaning quality, fabric response, and computerized equipment;
 - ! *Financial information* on labor costs and cleaning pricing.
- ! Since wet cleaning is a new technology, **testing is required to refine the technology** and collect data on customer satisfaction surveys, evaluations of cleaning and finishing quality, and cost analysis:
 - ! Interested dry cleaners considering wet cleaning can use their skill and understanding of fabrics to **volunteer with demonstration projects**.
- ! Contact **trade associations for training opportunities** related to wet cleaning adaption to an existing dry cleaning operation (e.g. International Fabricare Institute, Neighborhood Cleaners Associations).
- ! Contact the U.S. EPA or the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health for **information on health studies, regulations, and alternatives** to the toxic and highly flammable petroleum-based solvents traditionally used in dry cleaning operations.

Sources:

Fact Sheet: *Straight Answers about Wet Cleaning*, Center for Neighborhood Technology, Chicago, IL.

Fact Sheet: *Wet Cleaning: An Alternative to Dry Cleaning that Is Safe for You, Your Clothes and Your Cleaner*, Center for Neighborhood Technology, Chicago, IL.

Newsletter: *Wet Cleaning Update*, Center for Neighborhood Technology, Chicago, IL, November 1995.