



SF Environment

Our home. Our city. Our planet.

A Department of the City and County of San Francisco



GAVIN NEWSOM
Mayor

JARED
BLUMENFELD
Director

PRESS RELEASE

December 4, 2009

CONTACT: Andrew Brown 415-519-5318

Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting Urges City Dry Cleaners to Embrace New Green Technology

San Francisco –Assessor-Recorder Phil Ting today urged San Francisco’s dry cleaners to adopt a new green technology called Professional Wet Cleaning, which is a safer, more efficient way to clean garments. “Wet Cleaning technology is the safest and most environmentally friendly technology on the market. It’s important for all dry cleaning customers in San Francisco to ask for wet cleaning at their local cleaners,” said Ting.

Under California state law, most San Francisco dry cleaners will need to switch from using Perchloroethylene (Perc) to an alternative technology, many of them as early as July 2010. Perc is a toxic solvent, which can cause cancer and contaminate the environment. The most common alternatives to Perc are also chemical solvents that pose significant environmental and health hazards. Wet Cleaning, on the other hand, is a water-based technology that is much safer. And an Occidental College study shows that Wet Cleaning is more energy efficient and is just as effective as other competing technologies.

Karl Huie is the owner of Pacific Heights Cleaners and San Francisco’s first and only Chinese American business owner to adopt wet cleaning. Huie switched over to Wet Cleaning in 2007 and says that his customers love that the garments feel and smell better. “Wet Cleaning cleans better, removes more dirt, and my customers can tell the difference.” He added that his business has substantially increased sales volume since converting to Wet Cleaning.

Debbie Raphael of the San Francisco Department of Environment explained that San Francisco dry cleaners are eligible for up to \$20,000 in grant money if they convert to Wet Cleaning. Interested dry cleaners can contact her at 415-355-3700.

SF Environment, a Department of the City and County of San Francisco
11 Grove Street, San Francisco, CA 94102
Telephone: (415) 355-3700 • Fax: (415) 554-6393
Email: environment@sfgov.org • SFEnvironment.org



Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper

Background:

Legislation passed by the California Air Resources Board will require all dry cleaners in California to stop operating their perc machines by 2023. Perchloroethylene, “perc” is a harsh solvent used for dry cleaning; it can cause cancer and contaminate the environment. Perc dry cleaners in co-residential buildings and those using machines greater than 15 years old will have to retire their machines by July 1, 2010 and switch to an alternative machine using hydrocarbon, silicone or water based solvents.

San Francisco has approximately 110 dry cleaning shops with machines on site, plus an additional ~200 agency drop shops. There are 54 perc cleaning facilities, and 40 of these facilities will have to replace their perc machines with alternative machines by July 1, 2010. New legislation proposed by Bay Area Air Quality Management District may require 53 of 54 perc cleaners to convert to a new technology by July, 2010. Most perc cleaners have historically adopted hydrocarbon, a less environmentally friendly option, instead of wet or CO₂ cleaning.

Wet cleaning has been identified as a truly environmentally friendly, non-smog forming technology that minimizes environmental and health concerns. Professional wet cleaning uses specialized equipment to clean garments with water and soaps.