The following notes are based on Criteria List 10001 Cleaning agents and pertain to building cleaning services (esp. end-of-build cleaning, maintenance cleaning).

Harmful substances from cleaning agents

The use of low-pollutant cleaning products can prevent substances that are harmful to the environment and to health from "contaminating" the environment (particularly via waste and wastewater) and the indoor air during both end-of-build cleaning (after completion of construction work) and ongoing upkeep (maintenance cleaning). Using such products also protects cleaning staff from hazardous substances that can cause skin irritations, allergies, etc. “ÖkoKauf Wien” has therefore developed comprehensive criteria for cleaning agents to be used in the cleaning of buildings.

“ÖkoKauf Wien” criteria

The criteria list for cleaning agents sets out minimum technical requirements for the respective product categories (floor cleaner, sanitary cleaner, etc.), lists the product requirements for the manufacturers and defines content limits for the critical substances. Floor strippers, for instance, are required to have a solvent content of less than 30%, while aromatic hydrocarbons and phthalates are completely prohibited. When selecting and using cleaning agents it is also important to ensure that they are suitable for use with one another and appropriate for the materials to be cleaned.

Example: Linoleum floorings

Linoleum floorings used to be delivered to the building site with a protective wax layer, which had to be removed after laying using a solvent-based stripping agent. A metallised coating was then applied. Today's floorings are delivered to the building site with a high-quality, factory-applied surface finish, acrylate coatings being particularly advantageous because the finish can be partially restored. After laying, these floorings should not be cleaned with a stripping agent, as this would remove the factory-applied coating, resulting in unnecessary use of solvents, additional costs and impairment of the surface quality. Simple mopping in accordance with the manufacturer’s care instructions is sufficient.

Implementation of the “ÖkoKauf Wien” criteria

The Vienna Hospitals Association assesses the ecological compatibility of washing and cleaning agents offered in response to central calls for tender in accordance with the minimum requirements set out in the “ÖkoKauf Wien” criteria list for cleaning agents. Appropriate eco-friendly products are assessed in terms of price and the tender awarded to the best bidder. The Vienna Hospitals Association is then bound to purchase these products.

When new cleaning contracts are put out to tender by the departments of the city administration, manufacturers are required to confirm their compliance with the criteria for the individual products. Here too purchasing is done centrally and the cleaning products subsequently distributed to the users. This procedure guarantees that no unnecessary burden is placed on the environment in connection with cleaning of buildings belonging to the City of Vienna.