



Drycleaning Office of Air Quality

(317) 232-8154 • (800) 451-6027

www.idem.IN.gov

100 N. Senate Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46204

Introduction:

- Drycleaning does not use water as a solvent for cleaning. Instead, different organic liquids, derived from fossil fuels with particular cleaning and degreasing properties, and detergents are used to remove stains and other impurities from clothing. Perchloroethylene (perc) is the solvent used in 90 percent of drycleaning.
- Perc is a regulated substance and its emissions are required to be controlled. Long-term exposure to perc has been linked to cancer in some laboratory animals and therefore may be harmful to humans.
- Legislation requires drycleaners to capture and recycle or store a large amount of the perc used. Unusable perc must be disposed of as hazardous waste.
- A drycleaner's options for managing wastewater containing used perc include: 1) managing it as hazardous waste (collecting it in a non-leaking container for proper disposal); 2) discharging it to the sanitary sewer directly or after filtering it through a carbon bed; 3) treating it in an evaporation unit with a carbon adsorption unit; or 4) reusing it.

Regulating Drycleaners:

- Drycleaners are legally required to manage their use of perchloroethylene under three environmental regulations:
 - The Clean Air Act, which governs perchloroethylene drycleaners and petroleum drycleaners;
 - The Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, which encompasses waste handling, storage and disposal;
 - The State of Indiana Spill Reporting Rule, which covers significant spills that must be reported and cleaned up.
- Drycleaners are responsible for preventing the release of perc into the environment through leaks and vapor releases.
- Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM), in association with the Indiana Drycleaning and Laundry Association, created user-friendly compliance manuals and will provide on-site and phone assistance.

IDEM's Role:

- IDEM is responsible for protecting human health and the environment while providing for safe industrial, agricultural, commercial, and governmental operations vital to a prosperous economy.
- IDEM's Office of Air Quality Compliance and Enforcement Branch monitors drycleaners to ensure that they operate within the regulations imposed by the National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants.
- IDEM's Compliance and Technical Assistance Program provide confidential guidance to drycleaners in order to help them understand and comply with regulations.

Citizen's Role:

- Your clothing should be free of vapors and odors when you receive them from the drycleaner. If there are any offensive odors in your professionally cleaned garments, return them to the cleaner immediately.
- You can minimize contact with drycleaning chemicals by hanging clothes up promptly after use and limiting the purchase of clothing that requires drycleaning.
- You can also get your clothes pressed at drycleaners without having them drycleaned, and you can patronize cleaners that use an alternative cleaning solution (other than perc).

Drycleaning alternatives:

- Wet cleaning
 - Wet cleaning is an alternative process that uses water instead of a petroleum derived solvent to wash “Dryclean only” clothing. Special machines, soaps, chemicals and/or processes keep the garment looking new without using perc. The cleaner can determine which garments can be successfully wet cleaned by examining the care labels and using his or her knowledge of the fabric.
 - Wet cleaning is environmentally safer than drycleaning because it does not use perc or other petroleum-based solvents but the process cannot be used on fabrics that shrink, such as wool.
- Home drycleaning kits
 - The home drycleaning kits sold nationwide do not contain perc, but do use chemicals that are not 100 percent environmentally friendly.
 - The kits cost significantly less than professional drycleaning but may not be as effective as professional drycleaning. For clothing that is heavily stained or contains odors, professional drycleaning may be more effective.
 - Home drycleaning can reduce trips to the drycleaner.

Additional Information:

- For more information about perchloroethylene or drycleaning, please visit IDEM’s website at www.in.gov/idem/ctap/2358.htm.
- For help with questions and concerns, or to request free, confidential assistance, please contact IDEM’s Compliance and Technical Assistance Program (CTAP) at (800) 988-7901 (in-state only) or (317) 232-8172.