

Transportation Security Administration Pilot Project Finds Biobased Cleaners Work Well

When Federal agencies want to “go green” with biobased products, there are, of course, many ways to achieve that goal. The Department of Homeland Security’s Transportation Security Administration (TSA) took a very organized and methodical approach.

“The process started in June of 2006,” according to Kathryn Jones, environmental protection specialist with TSA’s Office of Occupational Safety, Health, and Environment (OSHE.) “We launched the Biobased Cleaner Performance Pilot in an effort to find a safer, environmentally friendly alternative for isopropyl alcohol.”

The alcohol-based cleaners, containing at least 70% isopropyl alcohol, were being used to clean screening tables and baggage areas at airports across the nation. “The main concern with an alcohol-based cleaner is its low flash point,” explains Jones, who points to the specific advantages of biobased cleaners:

- **Prevent the possibility of accidents caused by alcohol’s flammability.**
- **Provide employees and passengers with a less noxious and more environmentally friendly cleaner.**
- **Eliminate storage restrictions, such as flammable cabinet requirements, which can save both space and money.**
- **Eliminate labeling, spill, and shipping issues associated with isopropyl alcohol.**



Using one of the 12 non-alcohol biobased cleaners recommended as a result of the TSA performance pilot test project, Norma Rushing cleans a luggage table at Memphis International Airport.

TSA’s pilot program took about a year to complete and had three phases: soliciting products, field testing and data analysis.

In the first phase, TSA placed a notice in FedBizOpps, the single government point of entry for Federal government procurement. In response, TSA received 36 products from manufacturers and distributors as candidates for testing. Based on laboratory analysis, TSA selected 12 products for field testing. Before they were sent to selected airports around the nation, TSA ran a quick on-the-spot trial to smooth out future problems with the pilot at Washington’s Dulles International Airport, which is near TSA headquarters in Arlington, Virginia.

The second phase was actual field testing. TSA tested the 12 biobased products at 18 airports for overall performance.



TSA’s Deborah Odom cleans up a soft drink spill with a soy biobased absorbent product. “We find it works more quickly and better than clay-based absorbents,” says TSA Program Analyst Wilbert Jim Vlasaty.



TSA's Calvin Whetstone sits in his office desk chair made with soy content.

Each product was tested at two different airports for a period of five days. The airports ranged in size from very small to very large. TSA personnel at each airport completed surveys to rate each product's performance compared to alcohol-based products.

In the final phase, data analysis on all field-tested products – three of which are soy-biobased – resulted in all 12 products being recommended for purchase. The

products were evaluated for price. The cost for several of these products was roughly \$3.00 a quart (not discounted for volume) or \$1.50 per pint. The cost of a pint of isopropyl alcohol (70%) at TSA operations ranges from \$1.09 to \$1.40 per pint. The evaluation demonstrated that the biobased substitutes were near the competitive range.

TSA's Program Analyst Wilbert Jim Vlasaty at Memphis International Airport enthusiastically adopted the biobased cleaning products, along with several other green products that he uses in his daily operations. "The biobased cleaner works well and is safer and cheaper to use, and our people like it too," he says. The 12 biobased cleaners are now available for use by all TSA operations.

Mr. Vlasaty also is a keen supporter of biobased lubricants for TSA equipment with moving parts, along with hand sanitizer, trash bags, and even desk chairs and ballpoint pens. He, like many other TSA employees, is happy to have the opportunity to use green products in carrying out their daily operations.

For more information about biobased product use at TSA, contact:

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FACT FILE

America's farms are just beginning to tap their potential as a source for natural, renewable biobased products that offer benefits to worker health, the environment, America's economy and energy security. To learn more about the many biobased products made from soybeans, go to www.soybiobased.org.

Because of the potential for biobased products to create new markets for soybeans, U.S. soybean farmers have invested millions of dollars to research, test and promote biobased products. Much of this work was done through the United Soybean Board (USB), which is composed of 68 U.S. soybean farmers appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture to invest soybean check off funds. As stipulated in the Soybean Promotion, Research and Consumer Information Act, USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service has oversight responsibilities for the soybean check off.

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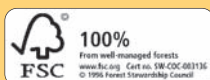
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Calculations based on research by Environmental Defense Fund and other members of the Paper Task Force.

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