



New York State Pollution Prevention Institute Wet Cleaning Program

New York State Dry Cleaner Survey

NYSP2I has developed a comprehensive program, the *New York State Wet Cleaning Program*, to address perchloroethylene (perc) related environmental and health concerns in New York State as a result of dry cleaning operations.

Past and current dry cleaning industry research has focused on the technical viability of professional wet cleaning (PWC), specifically its ability to clean garments using less energy and water than perc dry cleaning. Much of this research has been done in California using California dry cleaners as case studies. While the results of California's studies show dry cleaners can successfully convert from perc to PWC, it is unknown how those results translate to dry cleaners located in the northeast US. Furthermore, it is unknown if a relationship exists between the geographic location of a dry cleaner and its adoption of PWC or other perc alternatives.

Purpose

The goal of the survey was to understand the current state of dry cleaning in New York and identify barriers to conversion to PWC by assessing industry attitudes and concerns, along with any gaps associated with PWC technology.

Methodology

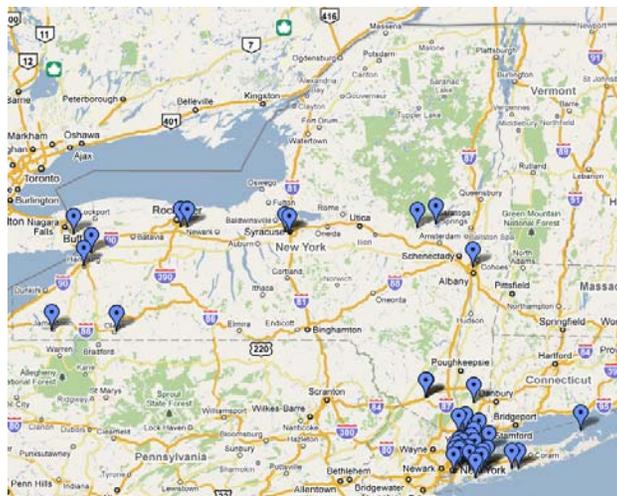
A telephone survey was developed by NYSP2I as a series of open ended questions to facilitate the development of a written survey. The phone survey was intended to be conversational between the owner/manager of the dry cleaning shop and NYSP2I staff. This allowed NYSP2I to ask follow up questions and ensure the answer was accurately understood and represented.

Results of the telephone qualitative survey were used to develop a written survey. The survey specifically focused on the use and attitude towards alternative cleaning solvents among NYS dry cleaners. The results of the survey will be used to develop effective outreach and education materials centered on PWC to expand the use and knowledge of PWC by NYS dry cleaners.

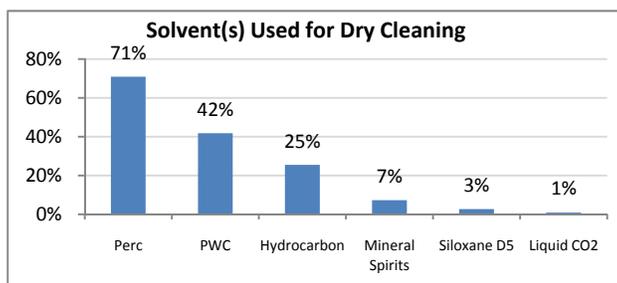
Results

Although the environmental benefits of professional wet cleaning appear to be well known throughout the State, educating dry cleaners about the ability to clean garments well without harming the garments is critical in order to ensure the adoption of professional wet cleaning technology. More than half of all survey respondents are interested in using professional wet cleaning and about 20% of all respondents have customers requesting the use of professional wet cleaning. Providing opportunities for dry cleaners to observe wet cleaning in action, talk with other cleaners who use wet cleaning, and learn from each other will allow cleaners to see first-hand, the results and requirements of a operating a wet cleaning system. This approach has been shown by other state programs to increase adoption of the technology.

Results show that the adoption of PWC has remained slow due to the perceived cleaning ability of PWC. Almost one quarter of all respondents believe that if a garment is marked with a "Dry Clean Only" care tag, then it cannot be wet cleaned. Educating dry cleaners about the garment benefits as well as environmental and cost benefits will further increase the adoption rate by dry cleaners.



Location of dry cleaners who indicate they perform PWC



Full survey methodology and results are available on our website at http://www.nysp2i.rit.edu/garment_cleaning/

For more information, contact

Kate Winnebeck, wet cleaning program manager
Phone: 585-475-5390 Email: kmhasp@rit.edu