

A GREEN WAGON DRY CLEANING

New Eco-Friendly Methods

by E

Dry cleaning may be a green choice, but it has not been a

It makes no sense. First, there are harsh chemicals used to clean the clothes. Most facilities continue to use PERC (short for perchloroethylene), a suspected carcinogen that is relied on in cleaners' airborne emissions, from where it can eventually contaminate soil and groundwater. With as many as 35,000 dry cleaning facilities nationwide, this poses a major public health and environmental concern.

Additional commonly used dry cleaning chemicals with toxic repercussions include petroleum-based solvents like Pure Dry, EcoSolve, and GreenEarth, a silicone-based solvent that breaks down into sand, water and carbon dioxide.

Beyond the chemicals, standard dry-cleaning practices come with their own waste; the most obvious being the ubiquitous plastic garment covers and disposable hangers.

HALLAK CLEANERS Award-Winning Green Cleaning

by Jennifer West

While most dry-cleaners have only recently jumped on the "greener cleaner" bandwagon, Hallak Cleaners, of Hackensack, has been working toward this goal for nearly a decade. In 2002, they received a Leading Edge environmental award from the



New Jersey Small Business Compliance Advisory Panel, in cooperation with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Hallak was one of two businesses in the state that year to receive the prestigious award, based on demonstrating exemplary environmental responsibility. "We are proud to be recognized by the state of New Jersey for our commitment to the protection of our natural resources," says John-Claude Hallak. He and his brother, Joseph, have run the family-owned business since 1982.

In 2008, every facet of the Hallak Cleaners operation was evaluated by the Green Cleaners Council for environmental sustainability. Assessed on water conservation, air and solid-waste emissions, energy capabilities, recycling, reuse, biodegradable packaging and other eco-friendly practices and technologies, Hallak was awarded four "leaves" out of a possible five and became the first cleaner in Bergen County to be listed with the Council.

As part of their ongoing environmental stewardship, the company has also introduced a Hanger Recycling Initiative. Recently, the California Integrated Waste Management Board calculated that 85 percent of all clothes hangers end up in landfills. Hallak is joining its Green Earth cleaning system with a recycling program for their new line of custom-molded hangers. For every hanger returned, Hallak donates 10 cents to the Making Headway Foundation (MakingHeadway.org). The new hanger recycling program, combined with a few minor changes currently in the works, should garner Hallak the coveted fifth leaf from the Green Cleaners Council in 2011.

Touring the 13,000-square-foot Hackensack facility is like viewing the inside of a well-oiled machine. With close to 60 employees bustling about, the mood is upbeat, reflecting a team of people who enjoy their work and are recognized for their contribution to the company and its greater vision. When asked what separates Hallak from other cleaners, John-Claude replies, "It's the people at Hallak that make us different."

In addition to the Hackensack establishment, the brothers operate a second Hallak Cleaners on the upper east side of Manhattan, in New York City. Each facility is a Certified Environmental Drycleaner, Certified Couture Cleaner and Licensed Green Earth Cleaner, and both offer a full range of traditional and specialty services, from bridal gown cleaning, preservation and restoration to fine French hand laundry for table and bed linens and professional fire and smoke damage restoration.

Hallak Cleaners is devoted to making a difference for its customers and for the environment. As Jean-Claude says, "No one is going to do it any better than us."

Hallak Cleaners is located at 172 Johnson Ave., in Hackensack, and offers pick-up and delivery service throughout Bergen County. For more information, call 201-343-7333 or visit Hallak.com.