

Sustainability Newsletter Week 57: Sept. 15-19, 2008. Topic: How “Good” Are Your Products?



A new website, www.goodguide.com, allows consumers to search for many household products to see how the products score in terms of social, environmental, and health impacts.

The GoodGuide claims the site, “provides the world's largest and most reliable source of information on the health, environmental, and social impacts of products and companies. GoodGuide's mission is to help you find safe, healthy, and green products that are better for you and the planet. From our origins as a UC Berkeley research project, GoodGuide has developed into a totally independent "For-Benefit" company. We are committed to providing the information you need to make better decisions, and to ultimately shift the balance of information and power in the marketplace.”

The social ratings are divided into the categories:

- Employees/related workers
- Consumers
- Society
- Governance

The environmental ratings are divided into the categories:

- Environmental emissions and impacts
- Environmental management
- Resource use
- Proactive environmental initiatives

The health and safety ratings are divided into the categories:

- Reproductive and developmental effects
- Cancer effects
- Long-term health effects
- Short-term health effects
- General health and safety

Here are two examples of similar products and how they rank:

1. Formula 409 All-purpose Cleaner:

Social:

-Employees/related workers—Rating: 5.2/10 (Fair)

-Consumers—Rating: 6.2/10 (Good)

-Society—Rating: 4.8/10 (Fair)

-Governance—Rating: 3.1/10 (Poor)

Environmental:

-Environmental emissions and impacts—Rating: 3.1/10 (Poor)

-Environmental management—Rating: 1.7/10 (Terrible)

-Resource use—Rating: 4.7/10 (Fair)

-Proactive environmental initiatives—Rating: 3.1/10 (Poor)

Health and Safety:

-Reproductive and developmental effects—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

-Cancer effects—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

-Long-term health effects—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

-Short-term health effects—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

-General health and safety—Rating: 2.5/10 (Poor)

2. Seventh Generation Natural All-purpose Cleaner:

Social:

-Employees/related workers—Rating: 9.1/10 (Excellent)

-Consumers—Rating: 8.4/10 (Excellent)

-Society—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

-Governance—Rating: 7.3/10 (Good)

Environmental:

-Environmental emissions and impacts—Rating: 7.6/10 (Good)

-Environmental management—Rating: 8.2/10 (Excellent)

-Resource use—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

-Proactive environmental initiatives—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

Health and Safety:

-Reproductive and developmental effects—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

-Cancer effects—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

-Long-term health effects—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

-Short-term health effects—Rating: 10/10 (Excellent)

-General health and safety—Rating: 7.5/10 (Good)

Explore the site to find out exactly what criteria are used to determine the ratings. Hopefully www.goodguide.com will allow you to weigh the pros and cons of your product purchases.