

## Drycleaning Safety and Perchloroethylene (Perc) Information

### Understanding Perchloroethylene (Perc) and Its Safety in Drycleaning

Over the past 20 years, perchloroethylene ('perc') has received significant negative publicity regarding its potential health impacts. However, according to the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) and other scientific bodies, much of this concern is not supported by credible scientific evidence.

The drycleaning industry has invested heavily in safety, technology upgrades, and emissions reductions, making modern use of perc controlled, responsible, and safe for both workers and consumers.

### Perc Safe Use in the Drycleaning Industry

- The drycleaning industry is a leader in pollution prevention and responsible chemical management.
- Perc's toxicity classification is similar to common household products such as bleach, ammonia, petrol, antifreeze, and nail polish remover. Like these items, perc is only harmful if misused — not under normal controlled conditions.
- Modern drycleaning machines recycle solvent, significantly reducing consumption and exposure.
- Drycleaners and their families work in these environments daily, and maintaining a safe workplace is essential.
- One district in California introduced a phase-out based on limited evidence, but other regulatory bodies reached different conclusions after fuller evaluation.

### Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Are the chemicals used in drycleaning dangerous?

A: No. Drycleaning solvents are handled in tightly controlled systems. Perc is classified similarly to many common household chemicals. Modern equipment is sealed, recycles solvent, and significantly limits exposure. Properly cleaned garments have no detectable solvent levels.

Q: Does perc cause cancer in humans?

A: Based on major scientific reviews, including Nordic studies involving more than 46,000 workers, perc is highly unlikely to be a human carcinogen. No credible studies link typical drycleaning exposure to increased cancer rates.

Q: Is there any danger from wearing dry cleaned clothes?

A: No. Garments properly cleaned and pressed contain no measurable solvent and pose no health risk. If a solvent odour is present, the item should be reprocessed at no charge.

Q: Are there alternatives to perc?

A: Yes. Alternatives include professional wet cleaning, hydrocarbon solvents, silicone-based solvents, and traditional laundering for suitable fabrics. Perc remains one of the most effective options and continues to be widely used safely.

### **Drycleaning Cycle FAQ (Perchloroethylene Systems)**

Q: What is the average total cycle time for a standard dark load?

A: A typical perc cycle takes around 45 minutes, depending on machine design and features.

Q: How much of that time is the wash cycle?

A: The wash portion generally lasts 15–20 minutes, depending on soil level and load size.

Q: How long does the extraction and drying stage take?

A: Extraction and drying usually take 30–35 minutes.

Q: Do I need a special machine to use perchloroethylene?

A: No special components are required. However, fourth-generation or newer machines are recommended for improved vapour control, programming flexibility, and energy efficiency.

Q: Are there licences or special fees required to use perc?

A: No. There are no special licences or franchise fees required to use perc in professional drycleaning.