

COMPILATION: whiteboard care and cleaning

Date: Fri, 17 Aug 2001

From: David Button <DaveButton@AOL.COM>

If you have a cooperative chemistry teacher or are also in charge of chemistry, you can make your own "white board" cleaner out of methanol (I use 9 parts) and acetone (I use 1 part). It's a lot cheaper than the "store bought" variety. The only thing you have to be careful is with OSHA/MSDS labeling requirements for liquids "not in the original container" requirements. I have found that inexpensive spray bottles can be bought at many "bulk stores" like Costco, BJ's, Sam's Club, etc.

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Date: Sat, 18 Aug 2001

From: Brenda Royce <brroyce@attbi.com>

I have also found effective 'homemade' solutions to cleaning whiteboards. For everyday cleanup I use a ~20% solution of alcohol/water using whatever short chain alcohol is available (methanol, ethanol, isopropanol) in a spray bottle wiped off with cut up T-shirt rags (non-abrasive). This takes care of the day-to-day stuff.

For more stubborn cleaning needs (old markings or permanent marker) I use straight methanol, denatured ethanol, or store-shelf rubbing alcohol (70%). I've never tried the acetone with it, tho' I think I'll keep it in mind for the really stubborn stuff. If you have a permanent marker emergency and no alcohol, it can be removed with a dry erase marker. Just rub over the perm. marker and then erase the board with a cloth.

In using concentrated alcohol, I have learned to clean the board as much as possible with dry rags or the 20% solution first and then use the alcohol. If too much marker is on the board when the alcohol is applied, it smears the ink all over the board and takes a bit to get it off. I've also learned to be careful not to use well-used cleaning rags when cleaning with the concentrated alcohol since it can dissolve the marker ink on the rag and smear it on the WB. This is not a problem with the 20% solution.

Best of all, these materials are easily available from a drugstore or similar store and the old T-shirt drawer, so it doesn't bite significantly into the program budget or require keeping track of when to order more WB cleaner (my particular favorite).

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Date: Sat, 18 Aug 2001

From: Doug Rickard <ddrickard@HOTMAIL.COM>

There are two things with which you need to be careful regarding the methanol/acetone white board cleaner.

(1) flammability - as you probably recall, it is not the liquid but the vapor that creates this problem and it will be exacerbated by a spray bottle.

(2) the toxicity of methanol; You can't live without your liver.... Haven't tried it, but diluting this solution with water would make it safer. I would start at 3 parts water and 1 part MeOH/Acetone.

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Date: Tue, 21 Aug 2001

From: David Boyer <rcq234@EARTHLINK.NET>

We use:

-- 'Simple Green" for W/B erasing (the non toxic, biodegradable stuff)... works well five-fold diluted. We buy a gallon, and dispense this in small spray bottles (found 4 for a dollar at the craft store)... lasts a loooooong time!.

-- Color coded 'eraser' bandanas for each team. A couple of markers and the small spray bottle can be 'tied inside' the team bandana.

-- Liquid car wax (Turtle Wax) for infrequent deep cleaning...also guards against scratching.

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UPDATES (The next year, I asked the teachers to comment, overall, on the compilation.)

Date: Mon, 26 Aug 2002

From: DaveButton@aol.com

I would agree with the need for dilution. I had a very small class and had the kiddies working in a fume hood when there were lots of cleanings to do. Some of it, I am sure, may have gotten into the air outside the hood, but it seemed to work.

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Date: Wed, 28 Aug 2002

From: Doug Rickard <ddrickard@hotmail.com>

Hi, Jane...

Well.... methanol is still very flammable... so is acetone. Glad I can afford the cheap cleaner from the district warehouse... I don't have to breathe these toxic things!!!

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