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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF STANDARDS
WASHINGTON, D. C.

Letter
Circular
LC 340

August 1, 1932.

SWEEPING COMPOUNDS (ALSO KNOWN AS "FLOOR SWEEP"
AND "DUST DOWN")

This letter circular has been prepared as a result of the numerous requests received by the Bureau of Standards for general information regarding sweeping compounds.

Although there are many sweeping compounds on the market made of sawdust, sand, ground feldspar, oil, wax emulsions, coloring matter, disinfectant, etc., it is believed that in many cases fine sawdust moistened with water at the time of use will prove satisfactory. Some prefer a compound containing sand, oil, etc.; for example, the Treasury Department at one time used a compound made up according to the following formula:

Sand	10	parts	by	weight
Fine sawdust	3 1/2	"	"	"
Salt	1 1/2	"	"	"
Paraffin oil	1	"	"	"

Mix thoroughly.

Certain Government offices have advised us that a compound conforming to the following formula has been satisfactory in service:

Fine sand	35%
Pine sawdust	40%
Paraffin oil	15%
Water (+ dye if coloring is desired)	10%

The Navy Department has used a compound consisting of a uniform mixture of clean, fine sand and finely ground sawdust properly impregnated with a refined heavy mineral oil and water. Such a compound must show on analysis: not more than 20 per cent of water, not more than 50 per cent of clean sand, not less than 5 per cent of refined heavy mineral oil, and the remainder finely ground sawdust. It is our understanding that the formulas

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mentioned are not patented. A copy of Navy Department Specification No. 51C10 may be obtained from the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy Department, Washington, D. C. Some of the commercial compounds are colored with iron oxide or other pigment and contain naphthalene flakes. We are unable to advise, however, as to the merits of these compounds.

Essential oils, such as oil of eucalyptus, oil of sassafras, etc., are frequently added to impart a pleasant odor to the compound or to mask any unpleasant odor that may be due to the ingredients used. We have no data on all the disinfectants that might be used, except that a pine oil disinfectant is frequently used.

We are unable to furnish factory plans or data as to cost of materials or mixing machinery, etc. If made up in small lots the compounds could probably be mixed satisfactorily by hand. Information on mixing, packaging, and machinery that may be advantageously used can probably be obtained from the MacNair-Dorland Company, Inc., publishers of the trade journal "Soap", 136 Liberty Street, New York City.

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