

Carpet and Carpet Tile

Covered Products:

Carpeting sheet goods and tile goods for new installations and for patching or replacements of existing carpet installations. Backing and adhesives related to carpet installations are also covered.

Goal:

To set minimum environmental goals for carpet installations in State properties and to provide recommendations for additional aspects of carpet performance and cleaning and maintenance for a healthier indoor environment.

Background:

Carpet is a significant source of landfill waste due to the frequency of replacement. It also can be a source of chemicals adversely affecting indoor air quality, and carpets and other “soft” surfacing can capture pollutants, adversely affecting air quality over time.

With proper specification, emissions or negative off gassing associated with new carpeting as well as installation waste can be reduced. In addition, technologies for recycling carpeting back into new carpets, or for use making new products are being increasingly commercialized and available.

Definitions:

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC) – Human-made or naturally occurring organic chemical compounds that are used and produced in the manufacture of paints, adhesives, some building materials, petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, and refrigerants. Reduction of the introduction of VOCs in interior environments is a part of maintaining good indoor air quality.

Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) – A chemical component that is still found in carpet backing. Vinyl chloride, which is classified as a human carcinogen, and ethylene dichloride, also known as 1,2-dichloroethane, which has been described by the National Toxicology Program (NTP) as reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen, are the basic building blocks of PVC. Chemicals commonly added to PVC include phthalates, which are developmental and reproductive toxins for which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has issued a Chemical Action Plan under the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). The combustion of waste streams containing PVC under both controlled and uncontrolled conditions is a significant source of dioxins and furans (which have been identified as priority chemicals for elimination or reduction by EPA’s National Waste Minimization Program), and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) (designated as reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen by the NTP).

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is an internationally recognized green building certification system, providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies intended to improve performance in metrics such as energy savings, water efficiency, CO₂ emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.

Standard Setting and Certifying Programs:

NSF - National Sanitation Foundation, is a not-for-profit, non-governmental organization that provides standards development, product certification, auditing, education and risk management for public health and safety.

CRI – Carpet and Rug Institute, is a not-for-profit trade association representing the manufacturers of more than 95 % of all carpet made in the United States, as well as their suppliers and service providers. <http://www.carpet-rug.org/>

Green Label Plus - is a labeling system developed by CRI that identifies carpets with very low emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOC's) represented as micrograms per square meter per hour. <http://www.carpet-rug.org/commercial-customers/green-building-and-the-environment/green-label-plus/>

NSF/ANSI 140 Sustainability Assessment for Carpet – is a sustainable carpet assessment standard which establishes performance requirements for public health and the environment. Information regarding the Assessment can be found at www.green.ca.gov/EPP/standards. A comprehensive searchable database of all carpet products certified to meet the NSF/ANSI 140-2007 standard can be found at www.carpet-rug.org/carpet-and-rug-industry/sustainability/sustainable-carpet/sustainable-carpet-list.cfm, and can be sorted to show all products certified at the Platinum level by all certifiers.

South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) - the air pollution control agency for all of Orange County and the urban portions of Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino counties, the smoggiest region of the U.S. Standards set by this pollution control agency are cited in LEED rating systems as well as regulation related to air quality in buildings. Information regarding SCAQMD can be found at www.aqmd.gov/rules.

Specifications:

Affected entities shall procure carpet products that meet the following specifications, except in cases where a match of style and lot number (for color) are needed:

- Carpet fiber and facing with no PVC content.
- Carpet products shall meet the testing and product requirements of the CRI's "Green Label Plus Program".
- Carpet adhesive materials shall emit zero-VOC's if possible, otherwise specify maximum levels per the SCAQMD Rule #1168.
 - Indoor carpet adhesives and carpet pad adhesives are designated as having a maximum limit of 50g/L (VOC limit).
- Carpet products shall be certified to meet the **NSF/ANSI 140 Sustainability Assessment for Carpet** at its **Platinum level**. Carpet purchase shall require proof of independent third-party certification as specified in the Assessment.

Affected entities are encouraged to:

- Select carpet products that prolong the useful life of the carpet and reduce waste generation:
 - Select carpet tile rather than carpeting to permit replacement of individual tiles when damaged.
 - Select durable products, like "loop-pile".
 - "Cut-pile" is not recommended for commercial or heavy-traffic areas.
 - Encourage the use of innovative packaging that is lightweight or includes recycled content, or otherwise reduces waste related to packaging.

- Reuse carpet, and recycle removed and replaced carpet whenever possible:
 - Include a take-back agreement from the manufacturer in the procurement of new carpet.
 - Work with the contractor during the purchasing process to look at available trade-in, reuse, donation and recycling options for used carpet and carpet tile, regardless of manufacturer.
 - Contractors are encouraged to offer programs that include take-back, trade-in and the proper environmental disposal of materials (including carpet or tile sold by others).
- Select and install products to maintain high indoor air quality:
 - Pre-ventilate carpet by unpacking and unrolling to air-out in a well-ventilated, uninhabited space for a minimum of several hours, preferably a few days, prior to installation.
 - Backing:
 - Use dry adhesive backing.
 - Select carpet with backing containing no PVC.
 - Avoid synthetic styrene butadiene latex backing.
 - Clean carpets per manufacturer recommendations and in accordance with NYS Green Cleaning best practices. <https://greencleaning.ny.gov/entry.asp>
 - Develop a Carpet Cleaning and Maintenance Program based on CRI guidelines for commercial applications. <http://www.carpet-rug.org/commercial-customers/cleaning-and-maintenance/index.cfm>
- Select carpet materials that conserve resources:
 - Select products with recycled content.
 - Select products that use 100% recyclable face fiber and backing.
 - Select products made from natural, renewable resources.
- Reduce the State's carbon footprint by procuring local, regional or national products.
 - For projects registered with a LEED rating system, some contribution to achievement of credits may be realized in purchasing units that are manufactured within 500 miles of the project site.

Toxics in Packaging:

In accordance with Environmental Conservation Law section 37-0205, packaging shall not contain inks, dyes, pigments, adhesives, stabilizers, or any other additives to which any lead, cadmium, mercury or hexavalent chromium exceed the following concentration level: 100 parts per million by weight (0.01%).

Contracting:

When and if the Office of General Services issues a new statewide contract for carpet and carpet tile, it shall issue a contract or an alternate contract for carpet and carpet tile that contains no PVC and ensures that commodities purchased pursuant to the contract are reused and recycled to the maximum extent practicable through take-back agreements with manufacturers or contractors or similar mechanisms.