

PVC Flooring, Wallcoverings Widely Used in Homes, New Report Shows

ALEXANDRIA, Va., October 20, 2010....A new report on materials used in home products shows that hundreds of different types of PVC/vinyl flooring and wallcoverings are available on the market, answering consumers' needs for safe, durable and affordable products for home and business use.

The report, by the Ecology Center, focuses on the ingredients used to make these and other products. According to The Vinyl Institute, the Resilient Floor Covering Institute, and the Wallcoverings Association, most of the test results on PVC/vinyl products appear to show that these products are being manufactured responsibly, with a commitment to product stewardship.

Most PVC/vinyl products manufactured or imported into the U.S. are being made without intentionally added lead or cadmium. Also, many product manufacturing organizations have developed or are developing voluntary certification programs that stipulate avoidance of such metals. A preliminary review of the Center's data shows that in the vast majority of cases, these metals are not found in the tested PVC/vinyl products or only in extremely low amounts, in some cases lower even than the safety levels for lead in toys set by recent federal consumer legislation.

Another ingredient found in the PVC/vinyl products tested by the Center was phthalate plasticizers, added to PVC to make flexible products. For the vast majority of the products, phthalate levels appear not to have been measured. Phthalate-plasticized products have been used for decades and have been thoroughly evaluated for safety by government and independent scientific organizations. They are widely accepted for use in consumer, medical and other types of products.

The Center rates the products it tests, but it adds an important disclaimer, noting the "ratings do not provide a measure of health risk or chemical exposure associated with any individual product, or any individual element or related chemical."

PVC/vinyl is a vital and versatile material that brings value to life. It is the material of choice in critical-care blood bags and medical tubing, pipe delivering clean, safe drinking water, tamper-resistant packaging, insulation protecting building wire, energy-efficient window frames and commercial roofing membranes, durable and easy-to-clean flooring and wallcoverings, and many others.

The Vinyl Institute (VI), based in Alexandria, Virginia, is the national trade association for U.S. companies manufacturing vinyl resin and additives. VI's mission is to advocate for the responsible manufacture of polyvinyl chloride, life-cycle management of vinyl products, and promotion of the value of vinyl to society. www.vinylinfo.org

The Resilient Floor Covering Institute (RFCI), based in LaGrange, Georgia, is the trade association for manufacturers of resilient flooring marketed throughout North America, and suppliers to the industry. RFCI administers FloorScore[®], a voluntary, independent certification program that tests and certifies hard surface flooring and associated products for compliance with indoor air emissions requirements of the California Section 1350 program. The environmental profile of resilient flooring products is further supported by the new NSF American National Standard 332: *Sustainability Assessment Standard for Resilient Floor Coverings*, finalized under the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and now being used to certify the sustainability attributes of resilient flooring. This standard provides verifiable and accurate information about environmental and social aspects of the production and use of resilient floor coverings. NSF/ANSI 332 will help advance the greater use of sustainability practices in the manufacture of resilient flooring. www.rfci.com

The Wallcoverings Association (WA), based in Chicago, Illinois, is a trade association representing wallcoverings manufacturers, distributors, and suppliers to the industry. It steadfastly supports responsible manufacturing and distribution of durable, safe and high quality products that demonstrate sustainable characteristics throughout their product life. For the last two years the wallcoverings industry has worked to develop a new American National Standards Institute (ANSI) SUSTAINABILITY ASSESSMENT FOR WALLCOVERING PRODUCTS: NSF 342 standard. This program measures the performance of manufacturers, distributors and their products and the continuing pursuit of improving products for environmental, economic and social parameters. www.wallcoverings.org