



CITY OF BOSTON
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green your home



BOSTON GREEN
BUILDING

www.cityofboston.gov/climate

GREEN OPTIONS: PAINTS & FINISHES

Conventional paints and finishes contain many toxic chemicals and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that can cause serious ailments and contribute to ground-level ozone. The non-profit certification organization Green Seal (www.greenseal.org) has set voluntary VOC limits, and anyone can find the VOC contents of a pint product by requesting its Material Safety Data Sheet from the manufacturer or paint store.

NO/LOW VOC PAINT

Green benefits: Reduces the emissions of volatile organic compounds into home; improves air quality; and helps reduce formation of urban smog.

Additional Info: White and light pastel-colored paints typically contain fewer VOCs, than dark pigments contain more VOCs.

Tip: Select a durable paint product so that frequent re-painting can be avoided.

LOW VOC, PLYWOOD

Green benefits: Plywood reduces offgassing, which is harmful to human health, into the home; improves indoor air quality. Note: plywood using urea-formaldehyde is toxic.

Additional Info: Materials containing water-borne urethane and acrylic general contain lower VOC than conventional solvent based finishes.

Tip: It is a good idea to keep a room well ventilated during and after the finish is applied.

SOLVENT-FREE ADHESIVES

Green benefits: Reduces toxic gasses or solvents that contribute to air pollution and asthma.

Additional Info: Solvent-free adhesives are usually stronger than conventional ones.

Tip: Use solvent-free adhesives for installation in the interior of the home to reduce pollutants.

RECYCLED PAINT

Green benefits: Eliminates risk of improper disposal; reduces consumption for virgin resources; cost-effective.

Additional Info: Recycled paints usually contain some VOCs, so look for the VOC contents before purchasing.

Tip: Look for recycled paint from manufacturers that have tested it and confirmed it to perform as well as non-recycled paint. Receive free surplus paint at City of Boston Public Works neighborhood yards. (www.cityof-boston.gov/publicworks/recycling)

Check our web site for updated information.