

A solution for healthier buildings: GREENGUARD® certification

March 15, 2010 - Wayne Engebretson

Recent concern over the use of Chinese drywall and the possibility it causes problems for both health and home has focused attention on the safety of building materials and products. The push for safe, sustainable products continues to increase, as evidenced by recent lead-pipe reduction legislation in [California](#) and Vermont. Enter the GREENGUARD Certification ProgramSM which is designed to provide standards of sustainability for indoor building products in order to minimize and control the harmful effects of mold, moisture and indoor pollutants.

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The GREENGUARD program is overseen by the GREENGUARD Environmental Institute (GEI), a non-profit group that establishes acceptable product standards for building materials, as well as interior furnishings, cleaners, electronics and children's products. Industry-independent, GREENGUARD is guided by a board of volunteers who are all experts in one or more relevant fields, including public and environmental health, building design and construction and indoor air-quality. GREENGUARD certification provides manufacturers with the means to legitimize and promote products they want to designate as sustainable.

All GREENGUARD certified products are required to be monitored quarterly for quality and ongoing compliance, and must be re-certified each year. Products are tested for more than 10,000 individual volatile organic compounds (VOCs). Currently over 260 manufacturers have products certified by GREENGUARD, representing more than 200,000 products and spanning 20 product categories. Four product certification programs are available:

- GREENGUARD Indoor Air Quality Certified - For low-emitting building materials, furniture, furnishings, finishes, cleaning products, electronics and consumer products
- GREENGUARD Children & SchoolsSM Certified – Covers building materials and other products in school environments and other places where children or sensitive occupants spend an extended amount of time. The United States Green Building Council recently accepted this certification for flooring and insulation in the LEEDTM rating system
- GREENGUARD PremierSM Certified – Currently a pilot program, Premier certification establishes emissions criteria for both short and long term health impact in order to minimize exposure to harmful chemicals. Certain heavy metals and toxins are also addressed. All types of products can be evaluated
- GREENGUARD Building ConstructionSM Certified – Focused on mold and moisture protection for newly constructed multifamily and commercial properties

Products that have been GREENGUARD certified are available for view, in a [free online guide](#).

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