

Floor Covering

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For government purchasers

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Responsible Purchasing Attributes

- Air quality
- Climate change
- Energy efficiency
- Product miles
- Recyclability
- Recycled content
- Renewable resources
- Toxic chemical reduction

Benefits of Purchasing

- Contributes to improved air quality.
- Reduced purchase of toxic cleaning chemicals.
- Creates markets for products made from renewable resources.

How to Buy

Washington State
Flooring Materials and
Services Contract
#00710.

[U.S. Communities Carpet
and Flooring](#)

Goal: To procure and use the most sustainable floor covering options available.

The world of flooring products is vast. It includes carpet, wood, vinyl, rubber, and more. Not only is the volume of material generated by waste flooring overwhelming, there are toxicity concerns as well.

Carpet alone accounts for over five billion pounds of waste generated in the United States annually. Over two billion square yards of carpet are sold in the U.S. each year according to a 2006 report published by Green Building, Inc. Carpet and rugs account for 70 percent of floor coverings purchased.

Toxicity may be an issue during the manufacturing and disposal of flooring products. Chemicals of concern include perfluoro-octane sulfonate, polybrominated diphenyl ethers, polyvinyl chloride, volatile organic compounds, antimicrobial compounds, and coal fly ash.

Standards

There are two third-party standards for carpet:

1. [McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry Cradle to Cradle \(C2C\) Certification.](#)
2. [NSF/ANSI 140 - Carpet Certification.](#)

The [Carpet and Rug Institute's Green Label Plus](#) standard certifies carpets, cushions, and adhesives with low emissions.

[Greenguard](#) and [FloorScore](#) are environmental certification programs for resilient flooring and adhesives.

Leading the Way – California Gold

In 2006, the California State Department of General Services issued the California Gold Sustainable Carpet Standard (based on the NSF 140 Standard). All carpet products on the California's flooring contract must meet the Gold Standard.

When this standard was issued, only one carpet was able to meet the standard. Now dozens qualify.



Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

The Department of Ecology offers tools and resources to make environmentally preferable purchasing easier.

Find out about environmentally preferable products, standards and certifications, law and directives, and more at our website:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/epp/>

Contact:

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Resources

[Carpet and Rug Institute](#)

[King County Environmental Purchasing Program - Carpet](#)

[Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance Carpet and Resilient Flooring](#)

[Product Stewardship Institute](#)

[United States Environmental Protection Agency](#)

[U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design \(LEED\)](#)

Product Performance

Flooring purchasing decisions are influenced by traffic patterns and exposure to dirt and moisture. Selecting durable, easy-to-clean products to reduce maintenance and waste is preferable.

Flooring tiles save materials in the long run, because worn or stained tiles can be replaced individually. Bare concrete floors are also a good option because they are easy to maintain.

Durability varies among resilient floor types. Linoleum lasts approximately 30-40 years. Vinyl flooring also tends to last a long time and is inexpensive to purchase compared to other products. However, cleaning chemicals and frequency of cleaning actually make vinyl products an expensive choice over the long term. Vinyl requires floor strippers to remove the finishes that must be applied to protect the floor.

In addition, most floor strippers require the use of protective gear because workers are exposed to toxic chemicals.

Flooring products made from natural fibers such as cork, linoleum, sisal, and hemp are other options. These products are typically toxin-free, more durable, and biodegradable unless mixed with nylon and other petroleum-based products.

End of Life

Floor covering vendors are mandated to provide the state of Washington with carpet reclamation regardless of manufacturer, fiber type, or construction.



Laws and Directives

Executive Order 02-03 Sustainable Practices by State Agencies	Requires sustainable practices by state agencies. This includes practices that do not sacrifice the needs of future generations.
Executive Order 04-01 Persistent Toxic Chemicals	Washington State Office of General Administration shall make available to state agencies products that do not contain persistent, bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs).
RCW 70.76	Prohibits the sale, manufacture, or distribution of products containing PBDEs after January 1, 2008. Exempts carpet cushion made from recycled foam and containing less than one-tenth of one percent of penta-BDE.
RCW 43.19A	Directs state agencies to develop strategies to increase recycled product purchases.
RCW 39.35D	All new state-funded facilities over 5,000 square feet must meet green building criteria. New construction and remodel projects are required to achieve LEED Silver certification; new K-12 schools must meet Washington State Sustainable Schools Protocol or LEED certification.

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