

# 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

The Office of State Procurement is developing a new contract for floor covering. Stay tuned.

## **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 three third-party standards for carpet:

1. [McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry Cradle to Cradle](#) (C2C) certification.
2. [NSF International's NSF 140 Carpet Standard](#) (revised in November 2007).
3. [Scientific Certification NSF International's NSF 140 Carpet Standard stems' \(SCS\) Sustainable Choice](#) 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:

[www.ecy.wa.gov/beyondwaste/epp.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/beyondwaste/epp.html)

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**Resources**

[California Integrated Waste Management Board](#)

[Carpet and Rug Institute](#)

[Earth 911](#)

[King County Environmental Purchasing Program](#)

[Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance](#)

[Office of the Federal Environmental Executive](#)

[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**

<a href="#">Executive Order 02-03:</a>	Requires sustainable practices by state agencies. This includes practices that do not sacrifice the needs of future generations.
<a href="#">Executive Order 04-01:</a>	Washington State Office of General Administration shall make available to state agencies products that do not contain persistent, bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs).
<a href="#">HB1024</a>	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.
<a href="#">RCW 43.19A</a>	Directs state agencies to develop strategies to increase recycled product purchases.
<a href="#">RCW 39.35D</a>	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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