

The Facts about Carpet and Indoor Air Quality

For Architects, Designers and Green-builders

Making the right decisions about carpet starts with having the facts. That is why the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) sponsors scientific research and gathers data from independent sources to help professionals and the public make educated flooring choices. **Visit carpet-rug.org to learn more.**

Issue

Carpet positively affects indoor air quality (IAQ) and is the lowest emitter of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) of common flooring choices.

What You Should Know

- Carpet manufacturers were the first in the flooring industry to thoroughly study their products for indoor air quality effects in schools and commercial settings. CRI worked with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), academic institutions and independent laboratories to evaluate carpet's role in indoor environment.
- In 1992, CRI launched its **Green Label program** that sets limits for how much VOCs from carpet, adhesives and cushion can be released into the air. Since then, the program has voluntarily raised IAQ standards four times by requiring even lower emission levels and increasing the number of compounds studied.
- As a result, carpet has become the lowest VOC-emitting floor covering and one of the lowest-emitting products used in new construction and renovation – much lower than products such as paint. The already low VOC emission of new carpet drops significantly after 24 hours - even sooner with fresh air ventilation.
- CRI set the standard again when it worked with California's Sustainable Building Task Force and the Department of Health to establish **Green Label Plus**, which certifies carpet and adhesives. Green Label Plus meets, and even exceeds, the low emitting product testing protocols used by the Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS).
- LEED ratings require that carpet systems meet or exceed CRI's **Green Label or Green Label Plus** programs to gain one full LEED point. Similarly, the Green Guide for Healthcare awards one point to health care facilities that install Green Label Plus carpet.
 - Picotte Companies was awarded LEED v2 Silver certification when it built a 471,000 square foot commercial office building using adhesives, carpet, sealants, paints, etc. that emit low or no VOCs.
- To maintain good IAQ, select only carpet, adhesive and cushion identified as Green Label or Green Label Plus.