



GreenNY

Floor Coverings

Although there are many products to choose from when purchasing floor coverings, certain materials are preferable over others. For example, certain types of floor coverings can contain toxicants that affect human health and the environment. Below, we outline some tips and tricks to ensure both your product's durability and low environmental impact.

Flooring material types

Choose hard surface floor coverings over carpet where possible. Pre-finished hardwood, linoleum, cork, rubber and USDA-Biopreferred biobased flooring options are preferable for common areas, healthcare facilities, and schools. Carpet often traps allergens that reduce indoor air quality when released by foot traffic. Carpet is also one of the most difficult products to recycle and takes up significant space in landfills.

Standard setting and certifying programs

Ensure your chosen product comes with a Health Product Declaration (HPD), and an Environmental Product Declaration (EPD). Your product must meet either Cradle to Cradle version 3.1 or newer at the silver level or higher, or the Living Product Challenge 2.0 label standard. Your product must also be certified as low emitting. Carpet should be certified to meet the 2019 Sustainability Assessment edition of NSF/ANSI 140 at its Gold level.

Best practices

- Procure products as locally as possible. Local wood products are highly preferable. It is most preferable, especially if they are certified to meet [FSC](#), [SFI](#) and/or [USDA Biopreferred](#) standards.
- Prioritize products that can be installed with nails or mechanical fasteners rather than chemical adhesives. This reduces potential VOCs and increases the recyclability of the product. [Follow this specification](#) if adhesives are required.
- If floor finishes and finish removers are needed, ensure they comply with [this specification](#).
- Clean floor coverings pursuant to the manufacturer's recommendation, and use green cleaning products that comply with [this specification](#).
- If carpet is being procured, ensure that you are purchasing loop-pile carpet tiles only (not broadloom). This enables individual tiles to be reused or replaced when damaged. Ensure a carpet cleaning and maintenance program is well-developed per [these guidelines](#) to increase air quality.
- Work with the contractor during the purchasing process to assess available trade-in, reuse, donation and recycling options are available for hard flooring and carpet.

Helpful Resources

- [Healthcare without Harm Healthy Flooring](#) – An excellent resource for healthy hard flooring criteria and a list of products that meet their criteria. [Carpet criteria](#) is also available.
- [Building Clean Certified Products](#) – A registry of all products that are certified to meet the Living Building Challenge, C2C Silver or higher and many more.
- [C2C Certified Products Registry](#) – See a list of products that meet Cradle to Cradle standards.
- [NYSDEC directory of secondary wood-using in NYS](#) – NYSDEC is promoting the sustainable harvest of local wood products, which helps enrich forest health, and promotes the use of a biobased, renewable natural resources. This directory provides a listing of NYS-based companies that use local wood products to produce flooring and other goods.

