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MPI Introduces "Extreme Green" Paint Standard

The most rigorous environmental standard in the world now requires durability, emissions compliance, and maximum 50 g/l VOC

To keep up with changing environmental demands, MPI is adding a new "X-Green" (Extreme Green) environmental performance standard to complement its MPI Green Performance^(TM) paint standards GPS-1 and GPS-2.

MPI's new X-Green Performance Standard will simplify the process of specifying environmentally-safe interior high quality architectural coatings by establishing new 'green' editions of MPI's existing paint categories. X-Green certification requires performance i.e. as it relates to durability; VOC <50 g/l; reduced or zero quantities of various undesirable chemical components; and certification of emissions compliance to CHPS (Collaborative for High Performance Schools).

MPI President Barry Law says "X-Green is now the toughest standard in the world, but it's also the most appropriate because it encompasses the three requirements for a truly 'green' paint: indoor air quality, environmental safety, and the durability needed to promote sustainable building practices. Our existing Green Performance Standards already required durability as well as VOC < 50 g/l. MPI felt it was timely to now add emissions requirements because they're required by CHPS (Collaborative for High Performance Schools)." The VOC emissions requirements of CA/DHS/EHLB/R-174 (commonly referred to as California Section 01350) are designed to increase indoor air quality through a variety of measures including limiting the amount of VOCs emitted from the painted surface in the 14 days after paint application. VOC emissions (rather than the old standard of total composition VOC) are increasingly used as measures to determine if a coating is 'green,' and are also cited in the LEED 2009 for Schools Rating System.

"Our January 2010 Approved Products List will include the first MPI X-Green certified paints," continues Law. "Paint suppliers who already have products approved in our paint categories can be listed in the corresponding X-Green category by meeting our GPS-2 requirement, which requires a maximum 50 g/l VOC, and submitting third-party test results verifying they meet CHPS emission requirements."

When the new Approved Products list is published, paint specifiers seeking high quality environmentally-friendly paints can start by selecting their preferred paint category (such as MPI #54 Latex, Interior, Semi-Gloss [MPI Gloss Level 5]) and then drill down to 'greener' options by choosing the appropriate suffix, such as #54 "RR" or #54 "RC" for recycled paints, and a designation such as #54 "X" for the X-Green products.

To help specifiers and end users choose products that maximize performance along with compliance, MPI will publish its first "Green" Guide Specification in the coming months.

Background on MPI's Green Performance Standards

MPI's Green Performance Standard is the only green paint/coatings certification required by both the US and Canadian governments, and referenced by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD).

MPI established its Green Performance Standards in 2005 because of its concern that the current 'green' or 'environmentally-friendly' coating requirements set by the EPA, SCAQMD, OTC, etc. (as well as voluntary organizations like LEED) were only based on VOC level. MPI believes that performance and durability are critical to true sustainability, since premature failure and the frequent repainting that results inevitably leads to greater VOC emissions and non-sustainable and costly maintenance operations. MPI Green Performance Standards were established to challenge the thinking that VOC level alone should determine a 'green' coating, so paints certified to MPI's Green Performance Standard:

1. provide performance and durability equal to their 'conventional' counterparts;

2. have eliminated or contain only trace quantities of various undesirable chemical components such as phthalates;

3. have reduced VOC. MPI GPS 1 sets VOC levels generally with LEED and SCAQMD requirements; MPI's GPS 2 -- the most stringent in North America when introduced in 2007 -- has a maximum allowable VOC of 50 g/l across the board for all paint types.

Background on MPI

Headquartered in Vancouver, Canada, MPI is an Institute dedicated to the establishment of quality standards and quality assurance programs, training, and publications for the architectural paint and coatings sector in the USA and Canada. MPI performance-based paint and painting specifications are used by the US Military; the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) as the replacement for US Federal Paint Specifications; by the AIA MasterSpec, referenced by approximately half of US architects; by NASA for facilities; by US Veterans Administration hospitals; by the Canadian Government's National Master Specification; and thousands of other North American designers, and facility managers.

Further information on MPI approved products, standards, training, and more is available at one of four websites at <http://www.mpi.net>.