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Materials Selection:

Certified "Green" Products and Indoor Air Quality Impacts

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Indoor Air Quality (IAQ)

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Session Objectives

In this interactive session participants will:

- Discuss some of the complexities, limitations, and consumer confusion surrounding commonly used environmentally preferable marketing claims;
- Discuss common sense approaches to choosing materials and services that may contribute to healthy IAQ in schools; and,
- Discuss in the field concerns related to green purchasing and facilities management practices currently used in schools that might impact IAQ and how IED might best support the needs of faculty and staff in America's schools to reduce these concerns.

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Terminology

Product
A good bought and sold in commerce.

Label
A mark, graphic or language applied to a product (adapted from *SPM*).

The Brand
A trademark or distinctive name identifying a product or manufacturer (adapted from *The American Heritage Dictionary*).

Environmental Marketing Claims
Any claim, expressed or implied, about the environmental attributes of a product, package or service in connection with the sale, potential sale or marketing of the product, package or service (adapted from FTC's "Complying with the Environmental Marketing Guides").

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Terminology (cont'd)

Environmentally preferable
"A product or service that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose."

This comparison applies to raw materials, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, use, reuse, operation, maintenance and disposal (EPA EPP Web site).

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Marketing as Environmentally Preferred

Sustainable

- Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Green

- Many definitions.
- Many criterion.
- Many different perspectives.

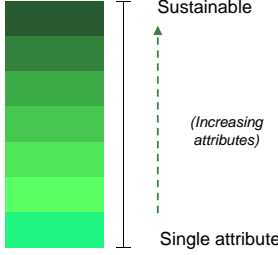
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"Green" Products

Shades of Green



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“Green” Products (cont’d)

- Many “green” products are marketed as healthy products.
- IAQ is important to consider as an attribute of healthy products.
- Products marketed or certified as “green” do not always consider IAQ as an important attribute.

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Real World Facts

- When purchasing products there is a need to balance
 - Safer and healthier components;
 - Performance; and,
 - Overall safety of user and occupants.
- In general, consumers don’t have time to do full marketing research on every purchase. To guide their purchases, they often depend on labels, certifications and claims.

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Behind the Label or Advertisement

<p>Standards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established procedures, specifications, and practices that may be adopted as guidance or as a requirement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In regulations – By trade, industry or professional organizations 	<p>Manufacturer Declaration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A manufacturer determination, through declaration or testing, that the product meets a specified criteria or standard. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Voluntary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Self-imposed – Trade association – Regulatory 	<p>Third-Party Labeling/Certification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An independent evaluation process to determine whether the product meets a specified criteria or standard. Seals or certifications are often granted with passing results. • Independence is often an issue with third party. • Third-party evaluation is often, but not always, requested by the manufacturer.
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Third Party Labeling/Certification Programs

U.S. Assessment Programs

- Indoor air emissions label/certification programs
- “Green” product assessment programs

Foreign Assessment Programs

- The Global Ecolabelling Network
- European product labeling/certification programs

Testing Laboratories

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Marketing as Environmentally Preferred

“Labels can conceal more than they reveal.”

(U.S. Senator Arlen Specter, Aug. 24, 2005,
PBS Evening News)

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Marketing as Environmentally Preferred

Environmentally Preferable

“Green”

Sustainable

Bio-based

Non-Toxic

Low-emitting

Natural

No/Zero – VOC

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Choosing Products and Materials with Reduced Impacts on IAQ

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Materials and Services Selection: Reducing IAQ Impacts

General Principles

- Common sense
- Precautionary principle and prudent avoidance
 - Groups vs. Individuals
- Staff education and training
- Professional/expert judgment

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Materials and Services Selection: Reducing IAQ Impacts

Best Practices for Improved IAQ

- Source control
 - Product and material selection
 - Appropriate use
- Ventilation
- Filtration and supplemental air cleaning as needed

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What IED is Currently Developing to Help

The diagram illustrates the roles and current activities of IED. It is organized into three columns under the heading 'What IED is Currently Developing to Help'. The first column, 'Provider of science-based info', includes a 'VOC HTML page offers distinction between indoor and regulated outdoor VOCs' and a 'Technical TVOC discussion document'. The second column, 'Educator/Provider of guidance', includes 'Guidance document(s) for evaluation of products on IAQ (purchasers/evaluators)'. The third column, 'Moderator/Collaborator', includes 'Collaboration and leveraging opportunities'. A central box labeled 'Issue documents' is positioned below the first two columns. A vertical bar on the left side of the diagram is labeled 'Current activities'.

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In Review


- Many of the terms used to market products as “better for the environment or health” are not standardized and can be misleading to the consumer.
- Products marketed using environmental marketing terms like “green” or “environmentally friendly” do not necessarily mean they are healthy or good for IAQ.

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In Review


- Several federal, state and local organizations are working to reduce consumer confusion with respect to environmental labeling, claims and labeling proliferation in the marketplace.
 - As part of these efforts, IED is developing guidance on best practices to reduce IAQ impacts from products for purchasers/specifiers and evaluators.
- Although there are gaps in knowledge and lessons to be learned, there are still general principles and best practices with respect to IAQ that can help schools and other organizations reduce impacts on IAQ when choosing products and materials for their facilities.

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Discussion

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 **Contacts and Acknowledgements**

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