



Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

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Wood Finisher

Member since September 2012

Management and Leadership



Environmentally Preferable Products and Services

After 33 years in the wood finishing industry, I finally have the chance to dictate what methods and materials are used in the finishing of wood products. I have worked diligently to reduce the environmental impact I have by switching to low VOC waterborne products, eliminating solvent based strippers and eliminating the need to spray finishes.

I have eliminated aerosol sprayed touch up products, which produce clouds of aerosolized VOCs that are slow to disperse in air. They are a danger to anyone with a heart or respiratory condition. I have also removed solvent-based finishes from my product line. I am able to produce high quality wood finishes without Methelyne Chloride strippers, oil-based stains and lacquer and formaldehyde based finishes, all of which have harmful effects on the nervous and respiratory systems.

My finished product has to satisfy the high expectations of Five Star Hotels. These expectations include low odor finishes that dry quickly, no toxic fumes from spraying, low impact on operations, and on-site refinishing and touch up. As the preferred finishing contractor for the Four Seasons Hotel in Baltimore and two other Five Star Hotels, I have adapted the traditional finishing method of French Polishing (hand applied finishes) to contemporary water-based finishes. This provides the aesthetic and durability of a solvent-based finish without the attendant odors and disruption of operations.

By eliminating spraying, I can also better protect vital hotel systems, such as the A/C and fire suppression systems, from drawing sprayed material into the A/C units and causing both financial and mechanical problems. Eliminating spraying also avoids accidental fire alarms caused when the sprayed finish sets off suppression systems. Hand finishing also minimizes the need for plastic-based masking materials and water-based finishes mean that there is no danger of photochemical reaction from rags soaked in oil.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

I purchase only waterborne low VOC finishes and stains. The VOC level for a waterborne finish such as Fuhr 345 is 0.89 pg (based on their MSDS) compared to solvent-based finish such as Kemvar, which has a VOC level of 668 pg (based on its MSDS sheet). I try to purchase locally and plan deliveries on a schedule that avoids unnecessary trips to vendors.

Waste

Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse

Rags soaked in water-based stains can be washed and reused.

Hazardous Waste/Toxic Use Reduction

By switching to waterborne non-catalyzed finishes, I have eliminated solvent based waste. It is difficult to quantify the amount of waste reduced because with waterborne products, I am able to use all of the product, whereas with solvent-based finishes I would have to catalyze them and any waste would be non reusable. I would also have to store them until I had enough to bring in to an environmentally sound disposal company. Eliminating the need for the transportation and proper processing of solvent waste is a significant cost savings. Other cost savings come in man hours, reduced labor on masking etc, reduced materials such as plastic sheeting and an increase in the transfer efficiency. With hand application, 100% of the material goes onto the finished product. With HVLP spray guns, the transfer efficiency peaks around 60%.

Energy

Energy Efficiency

Eliminating the spraying process also eliminates the energy used for spray rigs and exhaust and air cleaning machines.

Transportation

Efficient Business Travel

Providing estimates electronically cuts down on the trips needed to see the actual furniture.



Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.

Learn more at www.green.maryland.gov/registry

