THE SCIENCE DOES NOT SUPPORT THE CALL TO REMOVE PHTHALATES FROM VINYL FLOORING

WASHINGTON (April 29, 2015) – Phthalates are used in building and construction applications to make a wide-range of vinyl surfaces last longer and easier to maintain. Certain phthalates are used to soften vinyl because of their strong performance, durability and stability. We urge retailers and their customers to closely examine the misleading claims, rather than allowing scare tactics to distort the facts about phthalates used in vinyl flooring.

There are a number of concerning problems with the claims made in a recent HealthyStuff.org report about phthalates used in vinyl flooring, including:

- The report does not look at actual exposure to phthalates, but instead claims that the mere presence of phthalates in flooring is enough to cause a long list of negative health effects. Nor, does the report have any data to back up these claims about phthalates. The report itself acknowledges its lack of data, stating that “HealthyStuff.org ratings do not provide a measure of health risk or chemical exposure associated with any individual product, or any individual element or related chemical.”
- Phthalate use in vinyl flooring is not a “hidden danger” – phthalates have been thoroughly studied and reviewed by a number of government scientific agencies and regulatory bodies world-wide and these agencies have concluded that phthalates used in commercial products do not pose a risk to human health at typical exposure levels.
- Phthalates do not migrate out of products easily. Phthalates are used in vinyl flooring specifically for the many benefits they provide, such as resistance to extraction and evaporation.
- Most finished goods have laminates, coatings or finishes that further reduce the emission of residual chemicals in typical consumer uses. Removing the outer laminate and finishes with sanders to expose chemicals underneath can fundamentally change the properties of the product being tested.
- Extensive testing has not shown phthalates to be allergens, nor has research shown them to be strong irritants. As a consequence, it is unlikely that phthalate exposure could act as a trigger for asthmatic attacks.
- There are no existing Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) or other government regulatory restrictions on phthalate use in vinyl flooring. CPSC restrictions on certain phthalates are specific to toys and child care articles.

The manufacturers of phthalates invest significant resources to study and test our products, to provide scientific information in a transparent manner, and to fully communicate about safe exposure levels of phthalates used in commercial products.

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