



Kentwood, Couture & Abode Engineered Wood Flooring Doing Better: Indoor Air Quality Testing, Transparency & Compliance

Thank you for your interest in the indoor air quality standards for Metropolitan’s Kentwood family of engineered wood floors.

We take the health of our customers and our responsibility to the greater environment seriously. Most companies seem to think “compliance” or “being green” is just using the right label or creating a fancy logo, but it’s not. It’s creating an entire program and integrated system that is constantly improving and expanding.

We want everyone to do better. We are active participants in our industry associations, and work with those associations in developing best practices and responding to regulatory demands. Our compliance officer has worked with government agencies for improved industry oversight and has taught companies around the world.

Quality is paramount at Metropolitan. We dictate high technical standards for every one of our products and monitor production through our strict quality control program. Our compliance program includes uncompromising standards for indoor air quality (IAQ) and making manufacturing decisions based on the environmental concerns of today’s consumer. We conduct regular third-party testing and employ a full-time Environmental Compliance Officer (ECO) to monitor our QC program and triple-check their work. Why? Because it matters, and we strive to do the right thing and stand behind our work.

From CARB to TSCA to CANFER: It’s the law

“CARB P2” is probably the best-known formaldehyde emissions regulation for composite wood products, but CARB is law in California only. The US Environmental Protection Agency has adapted the regulation for nationwide US enforcement as the latest amendment—or *Title* as they are called—to the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA), Title VI. Canada has developed “CANFER,” which became effective in early 2023 and which has been aligned with TSCA Title VI. (Our ECO was actually an active member of Health Canada’s stakeholder committee and Metropolitan has provided significant industry commentary.) Collectively these regulations are known as “FERs”, Formaldehyde Emission Regulations and we are following the rules in all countries. Just as everyone should.

Beyond FER: CA Section 01350 Compliant

But following the law is just the bare minimum. After all, these FERs only regulate the core of the floor. In 2014 we began testing all Kentwood flooring against California Section 01350, which tests the whole product as it goes into your home—not just the core—giving a much more comprehensive indication of a floor’s impact on your indoor air quality than CARB, TSCA or CANFER alone. CA 01350 also sets allowable formaldehyde emission levels (for the entire product) at less than half of CARB/TSCA’s levels (for the core alone).



CA Section 01350 sets “health-based exposure limits to all volatile organic chemicals” that are defined as “chemicals of concern.” The rule specifies limits on:

Chemicals of concern include known or probable human carcinogens, reproductive/ developmental toxins, and systemic toxins with noncancer chronic effects contained in the latest published editions of the following lists:

Cal/EPA OEHHA list of chemicals for which non-cancer Chronic Reference Exposure Levels (CRELs). CRELs are inhalation concentrations to which the general population, including sensitive individuals, may be exposed for long periods (10 years or more) without the likelihood of serious adverse systemic effects (excluding cancer). CREL values are continuously updated by OEHHA (see <https://oehha.ca.gov/air/general-info/oehha-acute-8-hour-and-chronic-reference-exposure-level-rel-summary>).

Cal/EPA OEHHA Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act of 1986 (Proposition 65) lists of known or probable human carcinogens and reproductive/developmental toxins. These lists are accessible at http://www.oehha.ca.gov/prop65/prop65_list/newlist.html.

Cal/EPA ARB list of Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs). The TAC list includes all substances on the EPA list of Hazardous Air Pollutants plus additional compounds. This list is accessible at <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/carb-identified-toxic-air-contaminants>.

The rule notes that “*multiple sources of individual VOCs are often present in a building. To ensure indoor air concentrations are within allowable limits, each individual product category is capped at no more than one-half of the CREL for each chemical in a building type.*”

CA 01350 is recognized by LEED as a qualifying attribute within the low-emitting materials credit category. Compliance further meets:

- Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) Reference Specifications for Energy and Resource Efficiency, Section 01350 Special Environmental Requirements.
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims.
- ISO 14024 Environmental Labels and Declarations: Environmental Labeling Type I, Guiding Principles and Procedures.
- ISO 14021 Environmental Labels and Declarations: Environmental Claims, Terms and Definitions (Type II).

We knew we could do better. Enter GREENGUARD Gold.

At the end of 2018, we made a commitment to go further still and undertook to have our products certified under the GREENGUARD program, managed by Underwriters Laboratories (UL), one of the largest and most respected product safety organizations in the world.



GREENGUARD Gold certification **includes CA 01350 compliance**, and **in addition** establishes an extremely low Total VOC level, and sets emissions for specific VOCs at 1/100th of the U.S. Federal Government's Threshold Limit Value (TLV) for occupational exposure. It further limits the total emission quantity from the "aldehyde" grouping of VOCs. The GREENGUARD standard also has stricter testing protocols than CA 01350 and the program mandates expanded oversight on any product that includes a FER component. It is the strictest emissions certification we could find. Information on UL's GREENGUARD program can be found here: <https://www.ul.com/resources/ul-green-guard-certification-program> and a listing of all certified products at: <https://spot.ul.com/>.

According to the UL, GREENGUARD Gold certification is, *"designed to define low-emitting materials suitable for environments where people, particularly children and sensitive adults, spend extended periods of time, in particular schools and healthcare facilities."*

Every floor is compliant with CA 01350 and with the exception of some new collections, all engineered wood flooring is GREENGUARD Gold certified. Any product we create should easily meet the expanded emission requirements and we will certify each new item as soon as possible under our GREENGUARD program. All GREENGUARD Gold and CA 01350 certifications are indicated on a per SKU basis on the website.

A note on our finishes: they do NOT contain antibacterial/antimicrobial additives.

We have chosen not to follow the industry trend of adding antibacterial or antimicrobial material into our finishes. We feel there is insufficient science regarding both the long-term health risks and the actual effectiveness. Further, many of these additives are utilized as "nano-particles," a type of material which has not been well studied and is almost completely unregulated.

Many medical professionals and government agencies have expressed a concern about developing "super bugs," resistant to available surface treatments. If the finish "kills 99% of bacteria," that remaining 1% is likely to dominate in the future. Since regular cleaning is equally or more effective than adding a pesticide to the surface of the floor, we choose not to help inoculate bacteria and other microbes.

For more information, we recommend reviewing these quick ten takeaways https://prod-hml.s3.amazonaws.com/resources/Antimicrobial_WhitePaper_10Takeaways.pdf or for more details: <https://healthybuilding.net/blog/547-do-antimicrobial-building-products-protect-against-covid-19>, and <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/antimicrobial-resistance>,

We don't want to profit on the fear created by COVID. Regular cleaning, rather than untested additives, remains your best defense.

Doing Better

We hope this information has been helpful and thank you for considering the Kentwood family of engineered wood flooring for your home. Please contact your dealer or visit [Clean Floors](#).