

Product Selection

Traditional paints and finishes release low level toxic emissions into the atmosphere for years after application. The solvents that form the base of oil-based or alkyd paints are potentially hazardous to both human health and for the environment. The volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in these paints form a chemical reaction when exposed to oxygen and sunlight and the result is “bad” ozone which irritates mucous membranes and can cause nose, eye and throat irritations or lead to shortness of breath, coughing or asthmatic symptoms. It can also damage vegetation and plays a significant role in global warming. Paint-related products are the second greatest source of VOC emissions released into the environment after automobiles so it’s easy to see why consumers have demanded sustainable alternatives.

Low VOC and no-VOC paint

Early formulations of paint with low or zero VOCs did not perform well but for the last decade consumers have enjoyed an increasing selection of water-based paints (often referred to as “acrylic” emulsions). They produce little to no odor, are safer to use, quick to clean up and are highly durable, requiring less frequent repainting. Currently water-based paints dominate the market, accounting for roughly 80% of paint used today, and regulations continue to drive the VOCs and resulting emissions lower and lower. At M&L we recommend LEED-standard products for all projects, whether or not the job is a LEED contract.