

Green flooring can keep employees healthy and protect the environment

Air quality in your building is affected by man-made and environmental contaminants, like mold, bacteria, virus germs, and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) emitted by building materials, furnishings cleaning supplies, paints and pesticides. With so many sources of poor air quality, we must use every tool at our disposal to fight contaminants.

What if I told you that the flooring you choose for your next building or remodeling project could help reduce – or even eliminate – contaminants?

In previous Going Green columns, we have discussed “sick building syndrome,” a condition in which building occupants experience acute health problems that appear to be linked to time spent in a building. Symptoms of sick building syndrome can be caused by inadequate ventilation, VOCs and other problems associated with how a building is constructed and maintained. Contaminates can be carried through the heating and cooling systems and transported throughout a building’s interior.

We have also explored several methods of reducing or alleviating potential causes of sick building syndrome, such as increasing fresh-air flow through a building’s HVAC system, increasing natural light and using low-VOC paints and cleaners. But, while replacing HVAC systems, installing exhaust fans, retrofitting with filters and upgrading building insulation can be costly fixes, there is another method that not only helps eliminate airborne contaminants, but also protects the environment and decreases utility bills.



GOING GREEN
with Joe Bontrager
LEED Accredited Professional

The type of flooring used in a building can have a significant impact on indoor air quality. Carpets and wood

affecting the central nervous system and causing headaches and drowsiness.

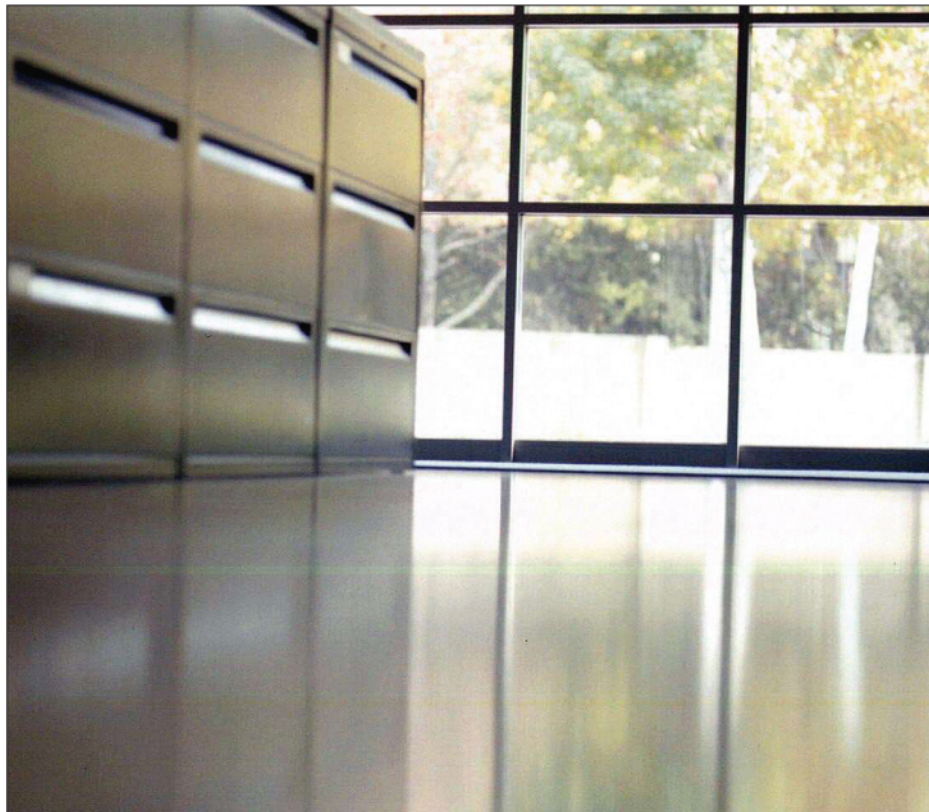
Installing polymeric flooring can actually combat airborne allergens and contaminants by increasing the negative ion count associated with normal use, and can minimize exposure to building occupants. With polymer flooring, pressure from foot traffic, heat and

flooring can eliminate 87 percent of common bacteria, 85 percent of E. coli bacteria, and as much as 17 percent of Staphylococcus aureas, the most common cause of Staph infections. Along with the health effects, polymer systems can diffuse odors by 88 percent in the first hour after installation. An added benefit to the environment is that polymer flooring is manufactured using 100 percent recycled materials.

Another great benefit is the fact there is no special maintenance needed. As long as it is kept free of dust and other debris, the flooring will continue to provide healthy benefits for the building and its occupants.

If you are considering a new construction or remodeling project, you may want to learn more about how polymer floors can improve the quality of indoor air in your building and help your employees remain healthy and productive.

Next month we will tell you how energy-efficient lighting options can boost the effect of polymer flooring to purify indoor air and eliminate microorganisms. ■



flooring that is manufactured with composite wood products, stains, varnishes, adhesives and sealants can all emit levels of VOCs that range from irritating eyes, nose and throat to

other sources excite negative ions within the flooring. The negative ions attract positively charged airborne antigens and pull them to the ground.

In the first hour of exposure, polymer

Joe Bontrager is a LEED Accredited Professional for J&S Construction Company Inc. in Cookeville, Tenn. J&S is a locally owned, full-service construction company with more than 50 years experience building projects, relationships and trust. J&S has completed over 80,000 square feet of LEED Certified projects. It has completed more than 5,000 unique projects and has more than 70 percent repeat customers. J&S employs 100 of the finest craftsmen and trade professionals, including a number of nationally recognized and award winning architects and engineers.

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