



Product Description

Paint includes paints and finishes formulated for consumer applications. Product types include primers, wall paint, trim paints, spray paint, watercolors, lacquers, varnishes, wood finishes and stains, automotive paints and coatings, and paint thinners and removers.

Mission

The mission of The Sustainability Consortium (TSC) is to improve the sustainability of products when they are made, purchased, and used, with a focus on manufacturers and the retail buyers who decide what products to carry in stores. The information in this document is drawn from our detailed research on known and potential social and environmental impacts across product life cycles. TSC acknowledges that other issues exist, but we have included here those that are most relevant to the decision making of retail buying teams and manufacturers. The topics are listed alphabetically for ease of reading; the order does not represent prioritization or other criteria.



Consumers

Consumer Health and Safety

Depending on use and exposure, some chemicals in paint may be harmful to humans. To protect people, manufacturers should formulate products to contain ingredients in accordance with applicable safety standards and should perform any necessary risk assessments on ingredients and formulations. Manufacturers should list ingredients in accordance with regulatory requirements and communicate proper usage and disposal instructions to consumers in a clear and accessible fashion.



Use of Resources

Climate and Energy

Ingredient manufacturing for paint consumes significant amounts of electricity and energy, leading to greenhouse gas emissions. Manufacturers should procure from suppliers that help abate these impacts by measuring, tracking, and reporting energy use and greenhouse gas emissions, with a focus on reduction. They should also perform preventative maintenance on equipment, replace inefficient equipment, use renewable energy sources, and encourage efficient energy behaviors throughout their operations.

Disposal and End-of-Life

Some chemicals that are present in unused paint may be hazardous to consumers and the environment if they are not recycled or disposed of properly. Manufacturers should obtain full chemical disclosure of raw materials from suppliers, perform assessments of all ingredients, and replace suspect chemicals with alternatives. They should also implement paint take-back programs to collect unused paint for proper disposal and recycling.

Material Efficiency

To help abate the negative impacts associated with chemical production, manufacturers should formulate paint to have greater durability, longevity, and coating efficiency, so that less product is required to complete a project.

Pollution

Paint manufacturing may result in the release of wastewater that contains chemicals that are hazardous to humans and the environment. To mitigate potential impacts, manufacturers should improve production processes to reduce wastewater generation, replace hazardous raw materials and processes with safer alternatives, and increase the durability and longevity of paint products.



Workers and Communities

Workers

Workers may be exposed to chemicals during production. To help ensure worker health and safety, manufacturers should have a documented health and safety management plan, including a chemical management plan where needed, and provide safety training and personal protective equipment to workers. Manufacturers should procure materials from suppliers that address worker health and safety transparently and should perform audits when needed.