



ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR FURNITURE

The District of Columbia is committed to procuring quality goods and services in a timely manner and reasonable cost that support the District in meeting its sustainability goals. Compliance with specification guidance is sufficient to meet PPRA Section 1101(a) environmentally preferable procurement requirements. To access solicitation documents with full contract language, click [here](#).



BENEFITS

Many furniture products off-gas chemicals linked to allergies, asthma, reproductive disorders, and cancer. Sustainable furniture can **protect the health of building occupants** by limiting emissions of these harmful chemicals.

Work performance may improve by up to **10%** by improving indoor environmental air quality.

SOURCE

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory: [Indoor Air Quality Scientific Findings Resource Bank](#)

Scope

This specification addresses furniture used in schools and offices, including:

1. Chairs
2. Cubicles
3. Desks
4. Modules
5. Shelves
6. Sofas
7. Storage cabinets
8. Tables
9. Workstations

Specification Language

Furniture purchased by the District of Columbia shall be certified to at least **ONE (1)** of the following standards:

- GREENGUARD or GREENGUARD Gold
- SCS Indoor Air Advantage or SCS Indoor Air Advantage
- Cradle to Cradle (certified at Basic, Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum)
- BIFMA Level (certified at Level 1, 2, or 3), with scorecard provided that shows at least one point for Credit 7.6, Low-emitting Furniture

Reporting

At the frequency specified in the solicitation, the Contractor shall submit to the Contracting Officer an EPPS Report, indicating that the products supplied to the District comply with the District's EPPS criteria. The following information shall be included in the report:

- a. Contractor name
- b. Contract award date
- c. Contract #
- d. PO #
- e. Product description - manufacturer description of product
- f. Sku
- g. Number of units sold



Specification Language (continued)

- h. Total cost
- i. Compliance with DC environmental criteria – Indicate how each product purchased is compliant with DC environmental requirements (ex. GREENGUARD certification). If the environmental requirement was not specified in the solicitation, indicate NA.

An EPPS Report template is available to assist Contractors in meeting the District’s EPPS reporting requirements on the [Sustainable Purchasing Program web page](#).

Background Information

Many furniture manufacturers offer products certified to one or more of the standards included in this specification. Use of these standards is typically shown on the webpage of the furniture manufacturer with additional detail available in product environmental fact sheets available online.

This specification includes multi-attribute and single-attribute standards. **Multi-attribute** standards, including BIFMA Level and Cradle to Cradle, cover multiple dimensions of performance. Products earn certification through a point system with prerequisites and optional points. Therefore, a certified product may not have a particular attribute (e.g., low emissions) unless it is a prerequisite for certification, or if the product’s certification scorecard shows that optional points were achieved for that specific attribute.

Single-attribute labels, including GREENGUARD and SCS Indoor Air Advantage, address one aspect of environmental performance. GREENGUARD and SCS Indoor Air Advantage both address chemical emissions from furniture which impact indoor air quality during the use of the product.

Different levels of certification are available for both single-attribute and multi-attribute labels; all levels qualify under this specification. All options to meeting furniture environmental requirements facilitate earning one or more credits through the LEED green building rating systems. Please see the Significance to the District section for additional details.



GREENGUARD is a single-attribute certification that focuses on indoor air emissions from furniture and other products. Certified furniture meets the BIFMA X7.1 industry conformance standard for volatile organic compounds (VOCs). GREENGUARD offers two levels of certification: GREENGUARD and GREENGUARD Gold (formerly known as “GREENGUARD Children and Schools”). GREENGUARD Gold is more stringent, and therefore may be suitable for sensitive populations. GREENGUARD certification is administered by UL Environment; certified furniture products are listed in UL Environment’s [Sustainable Product Database](#).



SCS Indoor Air Advantage, a certification program run by Scientific Certification Systems (SCS), is a single-attribute standard that also focuses on indoor air emissions. Certified products meet the requirements of the BIFMA X7.1 VOC emissions standard and are compliant with the BIFMA M7.1 test method. Certification is available at two levels: Indoor Air Advantage and Indoor Air Advantage Gold. Certified furniture products are listed in the [SCS Certified Green Products Guide](#).



Cradle to Cradle (C2C) is a multi-attribute standard that covers a range of products, including furniture, across five categories: material health, material reutilization, renewable energy and carbon management, water stewardship, and social fairness. Product certification is awarded at five levels (Basic to Platinum). The Basic standard generally includes an inventory and a commitment to ongoing assessment, while higher levels require products to meet minimum performance thresholds in each category. To achieve a higher level, requirements at all lower levels need to be met as well. C2C certified products can be found in the Certified Products Registry on the [Cradle to Cradle website](#).



Background Information (continued)



BIFMA Level certification is based on the ANSI/BIFMA e3-2012 standard, which was developed through a multi-stakeholder consensus process with manufacturers, government representatives, and other parties. Level certification means that an independent third party has certified that the product meets the criteria of the e3 standard. The standard includes prerequisites and optional credits in the following categories: materials, energy and atmosphere, human and ecosystem health,

and social responsibility. The number of optional credits achieved determines the “level” of certification. Because products can earn credits in different categories, even products that are certified to the same level can have different environmental attributes. For example, even Level 3 (the highest level) products are not required to meet the industry standard for chemical emissions. Therefore, this specification requires a scorecard to be provided showing that products achieved at least one point for Credit 7.6, Low Emitting Furniture. Certified products can be found in the [BIFMA Level database](#).

Environmental Hotspots The most important environmental benefits associated with this specification

POLLUTANTS/TOXICITY/ HEAVY METALS

Many furniture products contain and emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which can impact indoor air quality. Many types of VOCs have been linked to a variety of adverse health effects ranging from headaches to cancer. Furniture products with **GREENGUARD** and **SCS Indoor Advantage** certification meet the BIFMA X7.1 industry conformance standard for VOCs; **Level** furniture with Credit 7.6 also meets this standard. **C2C** requires assessments of potentially harmful materials (assessed as “X”); C2C Bronze and Silver certification require a phase-out strategy for “X” substances; and Gold and Platinum products may not contain any “X” substances.

RECYCLED CONTENT

Depending on the optional credits achieved, **Level** furniture may use recycled content (Credits 5.7.1 - 5.7.2), which reduces the demand for virgin wood and other natural resources. **C2C** certification requires a minimum “material reutilization score” (Bronze and above), which includes recycled or rapidly renewing content.

MATERIALS USE/ SUSTAINABLE SOURCING

Depending on the credits achieved, **Level** furniture may use sustainable wood that supports responsible forest management (Credits 5.6.1 and 5.6.2). As noted above, **C2C**’s “material reutilization score” (Bronze and above) includes recycled or rapidly renewing content.

END-OF-LIFE DISPOSAL

Recycling furniture means that less of it is sent to landfills. **Level** awards points for buy-back/take-back or leasing programs (Credit 5.9.4.2). The **C2C** “material reutilization score” includes recyclable or compostable materials (Bronze and above). In addition, District employees may donate used products to the Surplus Property Division (SPD). For more information about how to utilize the SPD please call the OCP Customer Contact Center at 202-724-4477.

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Depending on the optional credits achieved, **Level** furniture may use less energy in the manufacturing process (Credit 6.5.3), and during use if the product includes lighting (Credit 6.6.1). **C2C** requires that some amount of electricity used in the manufacturing process be renewable or be offset with renewable energy projects (Silver and above).

WATER CONSUMPTION

Depending on the credits achieved, **Level** furniture may use less water in the manufacturing process (Credit 5.11.2), and may have reduced wastewater discharges (Credit 5.11.3). **C2C** sets different requirements for water stewardship for each level of certification.

PACKAGING

Depending on the credits achieved, **Level** furniture may use recovered materials in packaging, which conserves natural resources and reduces waste (Level Credit 5.7.3).



Significance to the District

LEGISLATION This specification supports compliance with DC's Green Building Act which requires LEED Gold certification for New Construction [See LEED New Construction row below for details].

LEED FOR COMMERCIAL INTERIORS **BIFMA** products with Level Credit 7.6 , **SCS Indoor Air Advantage**, and **GREENGUARD** qualify for the LEED v4 Indoor Environmental Quality: Low-Emitting Materials credit. The Materials and Resources: Building Product Disclosure and Optimization — Material Ingredients credit awards points for reporting and/or optimizing material ingredients. **C2C v2** Basic level or higher, or **C2C v3** Bronze level or higher, qualify for material ingredient reporting; **C2C v2** Gold and higher, and **C2C v3** Silver and higher, qualify for material ingredient optimization.

LEED FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS: O&M **BIFMA** products with Level Credit 7.6 , **SCS Indoor Air Advantage**, and **GREENGUARD** , **C2C v2** Gold and above, and **C2C v3** Silver and above, are eligible for the LEED v4 Materials and Resources: Purchasing — Facility Maintenance and Renovation credit. Furniture is also mentioned in LEED's Facility Maintenance and Renovation Policy prerequisite.

LEED FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION **BIFMA** products with Level Credit 7.6 , **SCS Indoor Air Advantage**, and **GREENGUARD** qualify for the LEED v4 Indoor Environmental Quality: Low-Emitting Materials credit. The Materials and Resources: Building Product Disclosure and Optimization — Material Ingredients credit awards points for reporting and/or optimizing material ingredients. **C2C v2** Basic level or higher, or **C2C v3** Bronze level or higher, qualify for material ingredient reporting; **C2C v2** Gold and higher, and **C2C v3** Silver and higher, qualify for material ingredient optimization.

For more information about sustainable specification guidance or the District's Sustainable Purchasing Program, please visit: <http://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing>, call the OCP Customer Contact Center at: [202.724.4477](tel:202.724.4477) , or email sppdc@dc.gov.