

Coatings for Green Building, Will your new home (LEED) the way?

By Brian Mills

The United States Green Building Council has been working diligently for seven years to create a standard for building a more environmentally friendly home for your family. This standard is the LEED certification, which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design. LEED for homes is a voluntary rating system that promotes the design and construction of “green homes”. Until recently building a green home in North Florida was a color decision between Forest Green or Clary Sage for your exterior siding. A green home now uses less energy, water, and natural resources; creates less waste; and is healthier and more comfortable for the occupants. The benefits of building a green home are lower energy and water bills; reduced green house gas emissions; and less exposure to mold, mildew, and other indoor toxins. The US Green Building Council is still trying to finalize the LEED certification for builders. Their intended deadline is this summer.

Whether you're a builder or homeowner you can start going green with the coatings used for the interior of your home. The products I will discuss will address the indoor air quality of the home and help reduce the chances of mildew. One of the easiest ways to go green is to use low VOC (Volatile Organic Compounds) paints and cleaners in your home. Most coatings manufacturers have these products available in primers, flat, eggshell, and semi-gloss finishes. This allows you to apply environmentally friendly coatings to all your paintable surfaces including woodwork. For years painting contractors have preferred using Alkyd or Oil based products for interior woodwork and doors. These products are solvent based, which means mineral spirits or other solvents are used for thinning and cleaning tools. The alkyd products outgas for days, which creates the pleasant odor that no one seems to enjoy. These alkyd products also make an excellent food source for mildew. If moisture is introduced to the wood that they are applied too, you have a buffet for mildew to feed on. The low VOC products that are LEED certified also have anti-microbial characteristics, which means mildew can't grow on these coatings. Now if you are still awake after your coatings lesson, here is a quick and easy way to go green. Ask for Low VOC paints for your home.

Builders and Homeowners both benefit from building Green Homes. The builder shows their customers they care about the families that move into the homes they build. For the homeowner they move into a home that is a cleaner, healthier environment for their family. Green building is gaining momentum so LEED the way for your family or homeowner.

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