



Aims of The GreenGuard Environmental Institute

Globally, there is a growing awareness of the environment and the adverse effects of man's activities. These concerns have also begun to focus on our indoor environments, our living and working spaces. Over the past few years it has been established that the levels of volatile organic and toxic chemicals emitted by many of the fabrics, finishes and furnishings in new buildings have reached levels in indoor air that are potentially very harmful.

In response to this problem, the GreenGuard Environmental Institute (GEI) was established as an independent, non-profit making, testing and certification body. As an ANSI Accredited Standards Developer, the GEI establishes acceptable standards and testing protocols for indoor products. To receive Greenguard certification, a product must pass the institute's stringent chemical emission tests and conform to its strict standards. This certification ensures architects, designers, manufacturers and end users that Novalab GreenGuard certified products add no contaminants to the indoor air.

What The Dangers Are

In some cases, the measured levels of known toxins, such as formaldehyde, have been almost triple the maximum recommended industrial exposure limits. Formaldehyde is a colourless gas and is one of the more common indoor air pollutants. It is known to be generated from a number of sources and in particular MDF. This product is often used as a substrate to support laminate bench tops and the underside of these benches is normally left unsealed, leaving a large area of MDF to allow the release of formaldehyde.

Finding The Solutions

Health effects. When present in high enough concentrations it can cause irritation of the eyes and the mucous membranes of the nose and throat. This can lead to watery eyes, headaches and a burning sensation in the throat. In severe cases it can also lead to difficulty in breathing. Formaldehyde is classed as a probable human carcinogen by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and as a known human carcinogen by the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Some studies have linked the increase in the use of materials emitting formaldehyde to the increase in **Asthma rates**.

The current advice from U.S. environmental organisations is, where possible, use products that are manufactured from phenol formaldehyde resins (phenolic resin) rather than urea formaldehyde. Phenol formaldehyde resins produce less free formaldehyde thereby reducing the level of airborne contaminants. Where possible, completely replace MDF type products with products that are certified as low or no emission.

Novalab Resistop and Duratop Classic are not only GreenGuard certified, but in North America, they can also be used for worktops in GreenGuard certified office furniture to obtain a LEED-CI credit for Low Emitting Office Furniture (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Rating System for Commercial Interiors).



Novalab Resistop and Duratop Classic are manufactured from a minimum of 20% recycled materials. Only renewable forest products are used and they contain no heavy metals, rainforest timbers or tropical hardwoods.

Novalab
Resistop

Novalab
Duratop
Classic