



PRESS RELEASE

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PAINTERS SEEK HEALTHIER OPTIONS

Painters urged to choose non-toxic options

Professional painters should choose to use Certified low-VOC paints, according to non-profit program GreenPainters.

“Many painters are exposed to many dangerous and poisonous chemicals, many of which are proven carcinogens, in the course of their trade. These chemicals are absorbed through the skin, and the lungs when breathing in fumes. Over time, they accumulate in the body, leading to possible future health issues, including chemical sensitivity, impaired colour vision, tremor, cognitive defects, sterility and associated reproductive risks,” says Daniel Wurm, Managing Director of GreenPainters.

“Medical studies have proven that long-term exposure to VOCs from using conventional solvent-based paints in confined spaces leads to higher risk of birth defects, and other illnesses. ‘Painters Syndrome’ is a relatively common illness afflicting tradesmen, and can lead to permanent allergies. The World Health Organisation: International Agency for Research on Cancer Report linked working as a painter with increased risk of cancer by 20%, lung cancer by 40%. Painters Unions in Europe such as UCATT (UK) have negotiated a ban on the use of solvent based paints across councils in order to protect their member decorators. Ninety-three percent of painters had reported suffering health problems relating from solvents in paints.”

In addition, occupants of new Australian homes may be exposed to 20 times the maximum allowable limits of indoor air toxics. Studies conducted by the CSIRO show that the National Health & Medical Research Council’s (NHMRC) maximum limits of total volatile organic air toxics may be exceeded in such houses for at least ten weeks after completion. The most potent sources were found to be paints, adhesives and some wood-based panels.

It is estimated that each year in Australia more than 80,000 tonnes of VOCs are released into the atmosphere, with the paint industry contributing about 60% of this amount. Studies have shown that the cumulative VOC emissions from architectural painting operations exceed the combined emissions from a variety of industrial operations. VOCs from solvent and paint emissions contribute to harmful ozone formation and smog-forming peroxyacetyl nitrate.

Common chemicals in conventional paints include glycols, toluene, xylene, and ammonia. “As painters we are exposed to these chemicals every day, so by using low-VOC paint options we are minimising the exposure to toxins of our employees and clients.”

“You can have any color as long as it's 'green!', said Mr Wurm. ‘Our program can help painters make healthier choices while staying viable businesses. We can help advise on healthier paint options for every kind of project, from heavy industrial applications to domestic and commercial.’”

Greenpainters is a network of professional tradesmen established to provide advice, knowledge and skills to help consumers get the best environmentally-friendly, non-toxic coating for their painting and decorating project. Their web-site greenpainters.com.au provides objective summaries of sustainable paints and coatings, and information to help builders and renovators achieve the look they want while being eco-sensitive and health-conscious. It has worked with Sustainability Victoria to develop programs for education of painting contractors, architects, builders and consumers. Because GreenPainters use low-VOC paints wherever possible, they avoid these risks, and enjoy better health.

If you would like more information about this topic or you would like to arrange an interview, please contact Daniel Wurm on (02) 66857522, email admin@greenpainters.com.au