

Finding EPP Furniture on Statewide Contract

OFF38: Office, School and Library Furniture, Accessories & Services

The [Environmentally Preferable Products Procurement Program](#) (EPP Program), administered by the Operational Services Division for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, has partnered with the Center for Environmental Health (CEH)¹ to help buyers find “greener” furniture options on statewide contract [OFF38: Office, School and Library Furniture, Accessories & Services](#). There is growing interest from buyers who would like to know more about the products so that they may make environmentally preferable purchasing choices. In most cases, environmentally preferable furniture is cost-neutral or may provide a cost savings for the buyer.

The EPP Program compiled a searchable list of furniture lines from existing OFF38 Vendor offerings which notes whether the items meet environmentally preferable criteria, including those for indoor air quality. The excel document (the table) titled *Environmentally Preferable Furniture on OFF38: Office, School and Library Furniture, Accessories & Services* and a full explanation of the criteria in the *Guidance for Environmentally Preferable Furniture: Review of Chemicals of Concern and Certifications & Standards in Furniture, August 2016* may be found on the [EPP Program Furniture Website](#).

How to Read the Table:

The information in the table was submitted by the vendors/manufacturers and it has not been verified by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. OSD will update the information periodically, but it is important that buyers verify the information with vendors prior to purchase. This table is meant solely as a guide to help buyers identify environmentally preferable options.

Targeted Chemicals of Concern, Third-Party Certifications, and Standards

The table identifies lines of furniture that have been manufactured with limited amounts or none of the following chemicals/materials:

- Formaldehyde and other Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) emissions
- Antimicrobials
- Flame retardants
- Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)
- Per- and poly-fluorinated chemicals used as stain/water/oil resistant treatments

Currently, these chemicals are not restricted from use on this contract, but they are toxic or hazardous and have documented indoor air quality, environmental, and/or health concerns as reviewed in the Guidance document. Please note that there are a few allowable uses for some of the chemicals of concern as listed in the table.

The table also identifies third-party certifications or other environmental standards applicable to furniture that may be of interest to large volume buyers who specify these certifications or standards in their bids.

Some vendors/manufacturers indicated that “All” of their products met various environmental attributes, while others indicated that only “Some” of their products within a line would meet the attributes – meaning that buyer choice of fabric, finish, and other options would determine whether the line has targeted chemicals of concern. Buyers should confirm their desired environmental specifications with the vendor prior to purchase and discuss how the vendor will provide evidence of conformance.

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Column P in the table indicates EPP, EPP Plus, or is blank. If EPP is listed, it indicates the furniture line has met the baseline environmental criteria as listed below. If EPP Plus is listed, it indicates the line meets baseline environmental criteria in addition to one (or more) of the listed attributes below. If it is blank, it means that the furniture does not meet the baseline criteria.

¹ CEH is a national non-profit that works with communities, consumers, workers, government, and the private sector to support projects and policy advocating for less toxic and safer environments www.ceh.org



Environmentally Preferable Furniture for Indoor Air Environments

EPP - Lines that indicate “all” or “some” for the following attributes meets baseline EPP criteria for better indoor air quality:
Meets California Section 01350 (CDPH/EHLB Standard Method v1.1): Reduced VOC emissions
Meets CA Emissions Standards (CCR, Title 17): Reduced formaldehyde emissions from composite wood products
Flame Retardant Free: Meets flammability standard without the use of flame retardant chemicals. Excludes TB133 furniture (see guidance for more information on TB133). Note: electrical components and plastic parts are not covered by this standard
Free of Added Antimicrobials: Antimicrobials added for the sole purpose of preserving the product are exempt
Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) Free: Products made of less than 1% PVC by weight are exempt
Per- and Poly-Fluorinated Chemical Free: Restricts the use of fluorinated stain/water/oil repellant treatments
EPP Plus - Lines that meet the baseline criteria above, and have at least one of the following:
GreenGuard GOLD Certified: Third-party certification for reduced VOC emissions
Scientific Certification Systems (SCS) Indoor Advantage GOLD Certified: Third-party certification for reduced VOC emissions
Cradle to Cradle Certified: Multi-attribute sustainability standard. Ask what level of certification the product meets. If you have specific environmental priorities, ask if they are included in the certification.
BIFMA Level® Certified: Multi-attribute sustainability standard. Ask what level of certification the product meets. If you have specific environmental priorities, ask if they are included in the certification.
Health Product Declaration (HPD): A disclosure mechanism for the contents in products along with the associated health information.

Some additional attributes that may be of interest to large volume buyers also have been included in the table for reference only:

1. **Healthy Interiors Challenge:** Restricts the use of multiple chemicals of concern and meets MA’s baseline criteria.
2. **Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified:** Wood is from responsibly managed and harvested forests.
3. **Labeled for Flame Retardants:** Products are labeled so purchasers may verify flame retardant free products.
Note: electrical components and plastic parts are not covered by this label.

For more information about each attribute listed above, please refer to the [Guidance for Environmentally Preferable Furniture: Review of Chemicals of Concern and Certifications & Standards in Furniture, August 2016](#).

To find furniture pricing, please visit the OFF38 Master Purchase Blanket Agreements (MBPO)² listed in [COMMBUYS](#), the Commonwealth’s electronic market center. MBPO’s are the COMMBUYS contracts with vendors.

Four Questions to Ask the Vendor Prior to Purchase

Environmental attributes vary by product type, product line, and by manufacturer. To ensure that you select the healthiest furniture options, please use the following four recommendations to help guide your purchasing decisions.

1. **Chemicals/Products of Concern:** Ask the vendor to assist you in selecting options that do not contain indoor air contaminants including formaldehyde and other VOCs; flame retardant chemicals; fluorinated stain treatments; antimicrobials; and PVC (polyvinyl chloride). If flame retardants are required, specify the use of “non-halogenated” flame retardant chemicals, meaning they don’t contain bromine or chlorine.
2. **Fabric Choice:** Ask the vendor to help you identify fabrics free of fluorinated stain treatments, antimicrobials, PVC, and/or flame retardants. Proper fabric choice is essential to ensure a healthier product.
3. **Recycled content:** Ask the vendor if recycled content is used in any component of the product and, if so, ask if they know the source of the recycled content and if they can confirm whether it contains any of the identified chemicals of concern. While the use of recycled content generally is a positive environmental attribute, the use of recycled content plastics has the potential to introduce one or more of the chemicals of concern into the product.
4. **Verification:** Ask your vendor for verification of 3rd party certifications or compliance to any claimed attributes.

² To find the price sheets, go to www.commbuys.com, click the “contracts and bid search” button, click the “contracts/blankets” button and then type “Off38” in the “contract/blanket description” field.