

Resilient Flooring – Multiple Options, All Environmentally Superior

Environmental and Human Health Impact: Reduce lifecycle exposure and use of chemicals of concern listed in Kaiser Permanente's EPP policy.

Business Impact: New product choices range in savings from cost neutral to a **60 percent** savings.

Challenge

In 2009, Kaiser Permanente developed and adopted a multi-year environmental stewardship strategy to support our overarching commitment to programs addressing safety, human health and environmental excellence. At that time, organizational guidelines were adopted to address sustainable food, climate, and safer chemicals. The safer chemicals plan included performing a chemical hazard assessment that ultimately generated a Targeted Ten list of products that are pervasive in our facilities and could potentially expose employees and patients to chemicals of concern as defined in our Environmental Preferable Purchasing (EPP) policy.

KP committed to substitute those products with safer alternatives, where alternatives meet all requirements of the KP sourcing process. One of the Targeted Ten products is **resilient flooring**. KP sought to select flooring that has the smallest health risk associated with both the material components of the flooring and the chemicals needed to clean and maintain the flooring.

Aim/Goal

- Standardize high quality resilient flooring made of the safest materials and requiring the fewest chemicals for maintenance.

Team

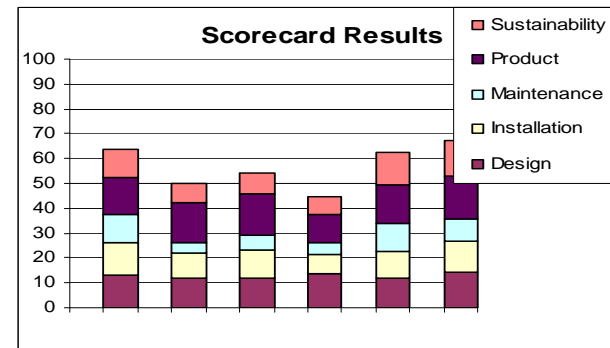
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 Resilient Flooring Sourcing and Standard Team

Actions Taken

- ✓ The sourcing team evaluated the marketplace for resilient flooring that met comprehensive requirements such as assurance of supply, quality, service, total cost of ownership, innovation, and environmental impact.
- ✓ The team developed a flooring guideline based on empirical data from multiple KP projects. The guideline focused on design, installation, and maintenance, including cleaning.

- ✓ The guideline was issued in the national-level RFP with the goal of alignment from manufacturers on best practices.
- ✓ Team used multiple national and international third-party certifications to evaluate the merits of the environmental claims and product material make-up from each company.

Results



(Suppliers and products were scored according to RFP responses and user feedback. Supplier names are omitted for privacy reasons; actual scores are displayed.)

Through this rigorous assessment, we validated that our current **rubber** flooring and newly selected **linoleum** are the safest products, with fewer chemicals of concern than other viable market options.

- ✓ Rubber is a mix of natural and synthetic rubber, has a high post consumer/industrial recycled content, and can be recycled.
- ✓ Linoleum is made primarily of linseed oil, pine rosin, cork, wood flour, and other natural minerals. The backing is typically burlap.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Flooring selections must consider training of environmental service staff due to the wide variation in maintenance needs for different types of flooring.

Next Steps

- ✓ Continue to replace vinyl flooring products during remodels.
- ✓ Continue to evaluate the marketplace for environmentally preferable alternatives that have even fewer health risks throughout their life cycle.