

## Topic: Health-related evaluation of building products

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## VOC label identifies wedi products as being very low-emission

Not only in public buildings, such as schools or nurseries, but also in the private construction sector is the topic surrounding the health of the inhabitants becoming one of the primary considerations. The central topic in this case is which substances and how many of them are emitted by building materials. wedi takes these questions seriously and it is for this reason that wedi has voluntarily subjected its entire range of products to an emissions test. With the best classification "A+ / very low-emission", wedi is now the only manufacturer of building boards that can mark its entire range of products in Germany as harmless to health with the VOC label. The basis of this was the test criteria of the German Committee for the Health-Related Evaluation of Building Products (AgBB).

As a result, the company has taken it upon itself on its own initiative to extend the classification obligation, which has been mandatory in France since 01 September for volatile organic compounds (VOC), to include Germany. The evaluation can be seen from the VOC label which is based on the efficiency classification of electric appliances. Planners, retailers, trades people and consumers can, as a result, see at first glance if and to what extent the building product might be hazardous to health.

### **Voluntary emissions classification**

To voluntarily introduce the emissions classification was a very natural step for wedi to take. This is because the building materials could represent a source of contamination for air indoors due to volatile organic compounds. It is for this reason that in Germany, building materials which come into direct contact with the ambient air in a room are classified in terms of their emissions – with the "Blue Angel" label, for instance. Building boards on the other hand are not subject to these health-related quality standards in Germany. This is because they are either tiled, plastered or painted and, as a result, do not come into contact with the ambient air in the room.

Nevertheless many local authorities in Germany are testing new buildings for the quality of the indoor air before acceptance and already take into account the advice of the Federal Environment Agency for schools and nurseries at the tendering stage. wedi products have been awarded the best classification A+ and this is the clearest possible signal to each and every one of its customers across Europe that no wedi product releases harmful volatile organic compounds.

### **VOC label: a meaningful evaluation system**

France assumes that all construction products that are used have an influence on the health of the inhabitants. All construction products have therefore been subject to the compulsory requirement for emissions classification since 01 September. All construction products are required to be labelled with the

VOC label as this is a meaningful evaluation system and informs instantaneously about the levels of emissions of volatile substances in the ambient air in a room. The system has been based on the efficiency classification which is in place for electric appliances. On a scale ranging from A+ (very low-emission) to C (high emissions), the user can read what risk exists when inhaled.

The next step will see Belgium adopt this evaluation system. It is also assumed that Germany and the other EU countries will follow suit.

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