

## Wallcovering Sustainability Standard *Big-Picture Thinking to Benefit the Industry*

**D**emand for sustainable building and decorating products has become an important consideration throughout residential and commercial markets. Customers are demanding to know the impact of products on the world beyond their walls, and they're accustomed to accessing this information as a part of their purchase decision. In response to this call to action from consumers and increased interest among wallcovering manufacturers, WA has drafted a Sustainability Standard for the wallcovering industry.

Once finalized, this new Sustainability Standard will recognize those third-party certified products that meet the sustainability criteria and provide defined benchmarks for producers that wish to attain them. More importantly, products that meet the standard will give consumers confidence that a wallcovering fits their own criteria for value and quality.

To gain an understanding of this industry-driven standard, it is important to clarify what is meant by "sustainable." WA approaches the concept of

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sustainability from three key perspectives:

- Environmental—impacts on public health, climate, air, water, and land;
- Social—working conditions and employment standards of producers;
- Economic—fair pricing throughout the supply chain, and retail pricing that meets consumer demand

From these perspectives, a product's degree of sustainability is judged based on its entire lifecycle. This "cradle-to-grave" approach takes into account the selection and acquisition of raw materials, manufacturing processes, distribution and logistics, installation methods and materials, removal, reuse, recycling and disposal.

WA's efforts to create a Sustainability Standard have incorporated close work with members, the EPA, wallcovering producers, customers, and development guidance from environmental consulting leaders at Rezin Inc. The result is a draft that incorporates the criteria listed above in a measurable, attainable process for wall-

covering producers.

WA is currently working with ANSI, the EPA, other environmental, health and safety regulators, manufacturers, and customers, to approve Sustainability Standard and establish a certification process. The approval of this standard is anticipated to be completed by the end of 2010. Once finalized, this new standard will give manufacturers and retailers a powerful new tool that informs customers and drives demand for a higher standard of quality, based on a product's greater impact on the world. ■

*To stay updated on the Wallcoverings Association's Sustainability Standard, visit their Web site, at <http://www.wallcoverings.org>, where you'll find even more resources. For quick ideas on how to sell more wallpaper, check out the WA retailer Web page, at <http://retailercentral.wallcoverings.org>. We also recommend you subscribe to *On A Roll—Highlights of Wallcoverings' Latest and Greatest Consumer Press*. It's free to subscribe (email [info@wallcoverings.org](mailto:info@wallcoverings.org)) and allows you to see the latest media trends and stories that your customers are viewing today.*

This monthly update is brought to you by the Wallcoverings Association. WA is a member-based, not-for-profit organization focused on the manufacturing, distributing and overall sales within the wallcoverings industry. To find out more about wallcoverings or the association, contact WA Headquarters at 312.321.5166 or visit [www.wallcoverings.org](http://www.wallcoverings.org).

