

Durable Coated Fabrics

The Durable Coated Fabrics Initiative is based upon the work being completed by the Durable Coated Fabrics Task Group (DCF Task Group) that resulted from a collaborative conversation at the Design Connections – Healthcare conference in February 2017 between in-house hospital interior designers and Terry Murphy from The Vinyl Institute. The Certified Healthcare Interior Designers (CHID) were looking for solutions to durable coated upholstery failures occurring in their various types of healthcare facilities.



Photograph 1: CHID Designers attending Design Connections in February 2017 in Ponte Vedra.

The definition of durable coated fabrics in this context include vinyl, polyurethane, and silicone materials used for upholstery specifically in healthcare settings.

As a result of this discussion, a stakeholder group was assembled that includes the Association for Contract Textiles (ACT), the Chemical Fabrics & Film Association (CFFA), healthcare interior designers from major healthcare systems (such as Johns Hopkins, Adventist, and NY Presbyterian), firm-based healthcare interior designers, durable coated manufacturers and distributors, Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association (BIFMA), American Cleaning Institute (ACI), environmental services facility-based representatives, and CleanHealth Environmental – brought together by The Vinyl Institute to look at viable and various solutions to complex issues for appropriate product specifications based on performance **and** sustainability.

As a result of a Round Table held in June 2017, monthly conference calls throughout 2018, and a subsequent survey process, the Durable Coated Task Group initiative identified nine priorities as follows:

1. Educating designers on appropriate application of durable coated fabrics within healthcare settings
2. Identifying current cleaning processes and chemicals used in Round Table attendee's healthcare systems for manufacturer testing
3. Completing a healthcare durable coated fabrics selection guide and checklist for healthcare settings
4. Identifying Performance Testing gaps needed to be filled (w/ the understanding that development of new testing standards & procedures is a lengthy process)
5. Developing a Healthcare Durable Coated Fabrics Characteristics Listing matched to existing Performance Testing
6. Identifying cleaning chemical system manufacturers and engaging them in a discussion regarding solution delivery methods and disinfecting agents that may be causing delamination
7. Developing Manufacturer produced training program created in conjunction with cleaning and disinfection chemical manufacturers
8. Completing a "day in the life" of Environmental Services Staff and observe cleaning protocols in conjunction with other cleaning impacts
9. Completing a business case that includes the full real-life cycle product failure costs

This collaborative process was presented at the Design Connection – Healthcare, Hospitality, Workplace, and Education conference in December 2017 in San Antonio by Terry Murphy (VI), Teri Bennett (JHHS), and Tim Elliott (Spradling International) and current status and information presented at the Healthcare Design Conference in November 2018 in Phoenix, AZ by Teri Bennett (JHHS), Barbara Dellinger (Adventist), Janan Rabiah (ACT), Ronnie Bell (Omnova), and Shari Solomon (CleanHealth Environmental). This update will address several of the nine initiatives listed above; including a checklist that has been completed by ACT for review and distribution at the AAHID Healthcare Design Conference Session.

The collaborative process provides a template for other sectors within the healthcare industry to come together to solve problems. Including all stakeholders and discussions around issues has resulted in the development of a survey to better understanding cleaning methodologies and issues, information shared as generic case studies that include information on product failures and costs related to those failures, and separate research initiatives that are underway to avoid product failures in the future.

Many thanks to AAHID for being the platform for sharing information on the Durable Coated Task Group outcomes and initiatives. The response to the work being completed has been in high demand and it is to be commended for AAHID to assist with the dissemination of this important information to healthcare design professionals.



Photograph 2: Terry Murphy, Teri Bennett, and Tim Elliott speaking at Design Connection in San Antonio in December 2017

Monthly conference calls are held with the initial stakeholder group and various experts are requested to speak to the group as required based upon specificity of the topic related to a certain priority. Sub-task groups are being developed to target specific priorities as the momentum continues to build and items are assigned, action steps established, and outcomes identified.

The following resources have been identified for the selection of appropriate durable coated fabrics within healthcare settings and the listing will be updated as new information and research is available from the Durable Coated Fabrics Task Group.

Chemical Fabrics and Films Association (CFFA) Performance Products Website

[**FOCUS on PU or PVC for Upholstery**](#): article that addresses the characteristics of polyurethane and vinyl for upholstery to provide guidance for selecting appropriate product for healthcare applications.

[**CFFA Publications/Standards**](#): provides listings of standards and technical information relevant to durable coated fabrics. Link provides Standard Test Methods and Performance Testing information.

Association for Contract Textiles Website

[**ACT Voluntary Performance Guidelines**](#): each ACT Voluntary Performance Guideline has an associated icon representing relevant test data to make a fabric (woven or coated) selection and specification easier for the designer. The tests represent minimum requirements and may not reflect requirements or codes in all locations.

[**Guide to Textile Specification**](#): this document supports designers in selecting and specifying the appropriate upholstery material for an intended end-use application.