NYC GREEN CODES
LEGISLATION AT A GLANCE

GCTF Proposal
Limit Harmful Emissions From Carpets

Implemented
Local Law 2 of 2012, City Council Intro 0585-2011

Summary
Carpets, carpet backing, carpet cushion and adhesives emit respiratory irritants and cancer causing compounds, which are harmful to the comfort and well-being of installers and occupants.

This law amends the Health Code and Construction to establishes standards limiting the level of volatile organic compounds in any carpet sold, offered for sale, or installed in New York City.

New Requirements or Changes
Effective: July 1, 2013. These changes do not apply retroactively; they are only triggered when carpet, carpet cushions, and carpet adhesives are sold, offered for sale or installed.

Adds new Chapter 14 to the Health Code:

- Prohibits the sale, offer for sale, or installation of carpet, carpet cushion, and carpet adhesive that do not meet the city’s standards.

- Establishes VOC standards for carpets and carpet cushions. Carpets and carpet cushions that comply with the Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) Green Label and Green Label Plus standards are automatically deemed to comply (the VOC standards match those of the CRI programs), unless their existing standard is later relaxed.

- Carpet adhesives are required to follow the New York State VOC standards for Commercial and Industrial Adhesives, Sealants and Primers (http://www.dec.ny.gov/regs/68559.html)

- Businesses that sell or install carpet are prohibited from removing the manufacturer’s label unless necessary for installation. The carpet businesses are required to obtain documentation from the manufacturers that their carpet meets the city’s standards and to post a prominent consumer notice about the requirements of this law.

Amendments to the Construction Codes and Building Code:

- Carpet and carpet cushions are required to meet the Health Code VOC standards.
Enforcement

The Department of Health and Department of Consumer Affairs will enforce this law. Penalties are $250 or $500 per violation.

Implementation

The large majority of carpets produced by American manufacturers already meet the CRI standards so compliance is most likely to be a concern for imported carpet.

Although the VOC limits for carpets and carpet cushions appear in the Construction Codes, enforcement will occur through agencies that are focused in compliance at the time of sale and on subcontractors that install carpet.