

Lockers Go Green

These days the buzzword is Green. Buildings fundamentally impact people's lives and the health of the planet. In the United States, buildings use one-third of our total energy, two-thirds of our electricity, one-eighth of our water, and transform land that provides valuable ecological resources. Our lockers are green in that they are environmental friendly and conserve our natural resources.

You may not know that our lockers are manufactured using a variety of composite wood and agrifiber products. These materials are commonly referred to as industrial grade particleboard and medium density fiberboard. The different types of board that we use provide specific features and characteristics for our lockers. Two desirable characteristics are water and fire resistance. These materials are obtained from trees grown in our world's forests. These forests must be properly managed by environmentally responsible companies. Trees are harvested from the forest and processed into lumber at a sawmill. The leftover material or sawdust, which a few years ago would have been thrown away, is gathered up, processed further into these materials. And, by using this material to manufacture, lockers will become Green in the following ways:

- 1) 100% Recycled;
- 2) Rapidly Renewable;
- 3) Regionally Extracted;
- 4) Managed Resources; and
- 5) Indoor Air Quality

Let's start with the 100% Recycled Materials. Particleboard is a wood panel product consisting of discrete wood particles of various sizes that are bonded together with a synthetic resin or binder under heat and pressure. Particle geometry, resin levels, board density, and manufacturing processes may be modified to produce products suitable for



Ideal Products offers a variety of wood and plastic laminate lockers that are manufactured to comply with the LEED® Green Building Rating System.

specific end uses. The particles come primarily from planer shavings, edgings, sawdust, and other process residuals. Essentially, the leftover portion of a tree when it is cut into lumber, is gathered up, salvage, and further processed into valuable construction materials. Truckloads of sawdust are dumped into processing bins or vats and cooked along with additional environmentally friendly chemicals added as bonding agents. After cooking the wood pulp mash is poured into sheets and eventually machined into wood panels. Panels can be made in a variety of sizes and density, thus providing great opportunity to design the ultimate locker product with specific particleboard needs. Properties that we are most interested in are water and fire resistance, screw holding strength, resistance to decay, and warping. The materials we use for the various components of the locker are 100% recycled and by weight account for 95% of the locker. These materials are used for the sides, shelves, tops and bottoms, and doors for our lockers.

A properly managed forest will regenerate or replace trees every ten years; referred to as Rapidly Renewable resources. Forest managers, lumber companies, and loggers cycle their timberlands very similar to farmers managing their fields. Trees are cut in specific areas



Since our lockers are located inside our buildings and locker rooms these could be a source for polluted air; however, our materials are well suited for these purposes. Several years ago it was determined that one of the binding agents used in the processing of wood fiber products was carcinogenic (cancer causing). This binding agent is urea-formaldehyde. Since this discovery our materials have been limited to containing acceptable levels of urea-formaldehyde

and replaced with new growth. Alternating areas are harvested and planted allowing for mother earth to maintain herself as well as provide materials for commercial use.

Due to transportation costs, we try to purchase our materials from not only local sources but also extracted from regionally near forests. In the United States we have several areas that are major sources for our materials. Near our southern California location on the west coast we have forest and lumber mills located in Oregon and Washington. Our materials arrive at local stock distributors or lumberyards by train and are delivered to us on a daily basis by truck. These materials are supplied typically in 4x8' sheets in a variety of thicknesses 1/4", 5/8", and 3/4". Our suppliers laminate the wood fiber products with various plastic materials such as frosty white vinyl, thermal-fused melamine, and high-pressure plastic laminates dependent upon its intended use. Here we cut the sheets of material into the various component parts and assemble into lockers.

And, finally we are all concerned about the quality of the air that we breathe.

considered to be less than .003 parts per million. This was considered formaldehyde free. Today we have materials available with no urea formaldehyde.

Through our endless design and engineering efforts we are able to offer state of the art, furniture grade lockers at an affordable and competitive price. Our method is to use recycled materials that are rapidly renewable locally available and environmentally friendly.

For more information, call 800-88-IDEAL or visit www.idealockers.com.

