

GOOD REASONS TO CHOOSE PVC PRODUCTS

PVC has been a controversial material for many years. However, the European PVC value chain has managed to take the journey from being severely criticised to become a role model for sustainable change.

Technically, environmentally and economically, PVC is now the best solution in many applications.

In this leaflet you will find many good reasons to choose PVC products.



Daily life wouldn't be the same without PVC!

PVC is the most used plastic in two of the most important areas of modern society: buildings and healthcare. With around 5 million tonnes manufactured in Europe every year, PVC is an essential plastic material.

PVC helps combat climate change

Buildings account for 38% of all CO2 emissions. Choosing low-carbon materials for building & construction is thus essential. Since most PVC products are long-lasting, recyclable and require low maintenance, PVC has a central role to play in the fight against climate change.

PVC took center stage at the greenest Olympics in history

PVC was selected for main venues such as the basketball arena, the Aquatics Centre, the Olympic Stadium, etc. PVC thus met the strict sustainability criteria specified by the Olympic Delivery Authority.¹

PVC has the lowest total cost of ownership in many applications

For instance, PVC flooring offers both the lowest initial cost and the lowest cost of ownership compared to some alternative materials over their entire lifetime.²

PVC helps conserve energy

PVC is made from 57% salt and 43% oil/gas, which make the plastic much more fuel efficient than competing materials. Also, PVC has good insulation properties and is for instance a superior choice for energy-saving windows.³

The UN sees the PVC industry as a role model for sustainable development

According to the UN Industrial Development Organization, "As a member of the Green Industry Platform, the vinyl industry can actively contribute to the global sustainability agenda through its continuous efforts to reduce its environmental and climate footprint and to develop new green products, services and jobs that will support a more sustainable world."⁴

Millions of tonnes PVC waste have been recycled since 2000

The VinylPlus programme ensures recycling of PVC waste across Europe. In 2014 alone, nearly 500,000 tonnes PVC waste were recycled. The aim is 800,000 tonnes per year by 2020.⁵

PVC is now free from heavy metals

1 January 2016 marked the end of the use of lead-based stabilisers in PVC in Europe. Lead has been replaced by non-heavy metal stabilisers. A debate on recycling of PVC waste containing lead and other legacy additives is ongoing at EU level.⁶

Hazardous phthalates are fast becoming a thing of the past

Around 30% of all PVC produced in Europe every year is used for applications that require flexibility — cables, medical devices etc. Through innovation, the industry has made available a range of alternative plasticisers to classified phthalates such as DEHP. This means the unique technical properties of PVC are maintained, without the use of DEHP.⁷

Tackling troublesome emissions

PVC is extremely well-suited for recycling, and the recycling rates are growing every year. Yet some fractions cannot be recycled. According to the EU waste hierarchy, these should be incinerated with energy recovery instead of landfilled. PVC was once considered a major contributor to dioxin formation in waste incineration. This is no longer the case. PVC does contribute to the formation of neutralisation residues due to its chlorine content. However, new technologies show promising results in reducing the residues to be disposed of.⁸

References

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