

# CFR The Commercial Flooring Report

For the Commercial Floor Covering Industry

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## Sustainability in the Flooring Industry September 2019

What is sustainability and what does it mean relative to flooring products? Sustainable flooring is produced from sustainable materials (and by a sustainable process) that reduces demands on ecosystems during its life-cycle. This includes harvest, production, use and disposal. We're going to focus on the new edition of NSF/ANSI 140 Sustainability Assessment for Carpet which highlights the Carpet Industry's Commitment to Sustainability. We spend so much time and hear so much about hard surface flooring that we forget that the leading flooring material is still carpet. It's share of market may be less than it was several years ago, but carpet is still king. The carpet industry has always been a leader in technology, concern for the products safety and in sustaining its viability and being able to be returned to itself or application for alternative products. These can be automobile parts, bumper stops, lawn furniture or a multitude of other products that can be made from carpet.

The newest edition of NSF/ANSI 140 Sustainability Assessment for Carpet, released August 2019, continues to promote the highest standard of environmentally responsible carpet products.

NSF/ANSI 140 was the first multi-attribute sustainability standard for carpet to allow architects, designers, building professionals, and consumers to identify sustainable carpet products. The original standard was created in 2005 by a multi-stakeholder group, including The Carpet and Rug Institute (CRI) and NSF International, an American National Standards Institute- (ANSI-) accredited standards developer.

NSF/ANSI 140, which focuses on life-cycle assessment principles in evaluating sustainability, was developed by a balanced committee of experts representing industry, regulators, consumers, and other stakeholders using ANSI's rigorous process for the development of voluntary consensus standards. The carpet industry's efforts with NSF/ANSI 140 and other sustainability initiatives are examples of its long-standing commitment to sustainability.

"Sustainability continues to be a priority for our industry," CRI President Joe Yarbrough said. "The update to NSF/ANSI 140 reflects changes in the industry and technology that maintains this standard as the best for certifying sustainable products."

NSF/ANSI 140 is recognized as one of the best standards for sustainability by the General Services Administration (GSA), EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) program, and US Green Building Council's (USGBC) LEED v4.1 program.



“Thanks to the joint committee, this update places it back at the forefront as the highest standard for environmentally-friendly products,” said Richard Turner, director of technical services for CRI. “The NSF/ANSI 140 Joint Committee is a group of dedicated professionals with a high level of expertise as evidenced by the quality of the updated standard.”



The following is the Carpet and Rug Institutes definition of sustainability:

“Sustainability is the emphasis on preserving natural resources and minimizing environmental impact in the production of products and their use.”

Sustainability and environmental efforts continue to grow in importance for many industries. Creating products that are green or sustainable is an ongoing challenge for businesses in these industries. The carpet industry is one such industry that is taking the lead with standards on sustainable platforms. This past summer, stakeholders from the carpet industry, associated industries, and other fields gathered to update NSF/ANSI 140 Sustainability Assessment for Carpet (NSF 140).

The NSF/ANSI 140 Sustainability Assessment for Carpet focuses on aiding material suppliers, converters, manufacturers, and end-users through design and product innovation, improved customer satisfaction, ecological restoration, and many other benefits. The carpet industry has made significant progress in reducing the environmental footprint of carpet, including landfill diversion, carbon dioxide emissions, energy consumption, waste generation, water usage, and hazardous air pollutants in the production of carpet.

Per NSF, the purpose of the Sustainability Assessment for Carpet is to establish consistent requirements for sustainable carpet products. These requirements are intended to form the basis of conformity assessment programs, such as third-party certification. The requirements for NSF 140 utilize a full analysis on sustainability with a focus on life-cycle analysis, environmental product declarations, carbon footprint, and impact on environmental health of the product. This rounded view allows contractors to know that a product with NSF 140 certification is the highest rating for an environmentally-friendly product. A specification that requires sustainability should utilize NSF 140 due to high standard for sustainability set by the assessment. Any contractor, architect, or building professional who wants to prioritize sustainability can use NSF 140 as a guide to selecting environmentally-preferable products.



## THE COMMERCIAL FLOORING REPORT

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“The update to NSF/ANSI 140 reflects changes in the industry and technology that maintains this standard as the best for certifying sustainable products,” CRI President Joe Yarbrough said.

NSF 140 recognizes sustainable carpet on three performance levels — silver, gold, and platinum — using a rating system for performance and quantifiable metrics in public health and environment, energy, recycled materials, and reclamation management. The silver, gold, and platinum rankings differentiate the levels of sustainability, but any product that is certified by NSF 140 is amongst the most sustainable carpet products available.

According to NSF, the standard provides a market-based definition for a path to sustainable carpet, to establish performance requirements for public health and environment, and to address the triple bottom line, economic-environmental-social, throughout the supply chain.

As mentioned earlier, NSF 140 is developed under a consensus process with input from various industries to use a holistic perspective in drafting the standard. The NSF/ANSI 140 Joint Committee is the body responsible for developing and overseeing the standard, so it maintains its status as the best standard for promoting sustainable carpet products.

The standard was first released in 2005 and quickly utilized as the go-to standard on sustainability. Due to the past success, NSF 140 is recognized as one of the best standards for sustainability in any industry. The General Services Administration (GSA), the agency that handles procurement for the US government, requires all products meet gold certification under NSF 140. Similarly, the EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) program requires products be certified NSF 140 Gold and by the Green Label Plus program, another ANSI-certified program from CRI. NSF 140 certification also contributes points under the US Green Building Council’s (USGBC) LEED v4.1 program.

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David Wardlaw, of Royal Thai and a member of the NSF/ANSI 140 Joint Committee, stressed the holistic approach of NSF 140 and how the multi-attribute aspect of the standard sets it apart from any other green certification.

“This standard is not a rubber stamp” he said. “We developed the standard to highlight numerous aspects of sustainability through the production chain that results in an assessment that is far and away the best on sustainability.”



Russ Delozier, director of sustainability for Engineered Floors, was a representative for the carpet industry on the NSF/ANSI 140 Joint Committee. He emphasized the expertise from the manufacturing side along with the academic community, procurement professionals, and others. He also highlighted the importance NSF 140 serves for many stakeholders and sustainability.

“Specifying a project is a complicated process, especially with sustainability, and NSF 140 makes it simpler and easier for manufacturers and consumers with regard to sustainability,” he added.



Troy Virgo, director of sustainability for Shaw Industries and another member of the committee for NSF 140, underscored how important the multi-attribute aspect of the standard was for different stakeholder groups.

“When it was first developed in 2005, this was one of the first multi-attribute, multi-stakeholder standard for sustainability in the built environment,” he stated. “The carpet industry’s willingness to listen to outside stakeholders, embrace change, align with other emerging standards, and push for higher performance has kept the standard’s requirements current and relevant.”

The all-round, collaborative effort from each stakeholder group cannot be understated in the work to develop this unique standard and how it benefits the environment and sustainability efforts.

“Sustainability continues to be a priority for our industry and we will continue to work to create products that are environmentally friendly along with promoting initiatives that create a brighter, more sustainable future,” Joe Yarbrough said.

CRI is the leading industry source for science-based information and insight on how carpet and rugs create a better environment for living, working, learning, and healing. CRI’s mission is to serve the carpet industry and public by providing facts that help people make informed choices. Its best practices promote a balance between social, economic and environmental responsibility for the long term. CRI does this for its industry, yet it strives to be a model corporate citizen for all industries.

Typically, we don’t take a whole issue and promote it in this newsletter. But the fact that the carpet industry continues to be at the forefront of cutting edge positions and technology, in my opinion, has to be recognized. Having been involved with flooring virtually all my life and being witness to virtually every flooring product and material, I believe the carpet industry continues to be at the forefront of responsibility. The issue of sustainability for any flooring product is to understand the product and apply what’s most appropriate for the application. There is more information on this subject from the carpet industry than from any other segment, such as the type of product that will work best in light,

## LGM and ASSOCIATES



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moderate or heavy traffic area. Unfortunately, a lot of great information has been removed by manufacturers but it's still available from CRI particularly in the category of performance. This is especially true for what product works where and why and mainly for commercial textile floor covering material. My mantra has been, not just for carpet but any flooring material relative to being green and sustainable is, "get in the door and keep it on the floor." Since carpet can be categorized so effectively relative to, again, what works where and why, it is the easiest product to comply with that mantra. Facing the onslaught of luxury vinyl plank and tile which is all over the place in quality, installation techniques and methods, sales and marketing elaborations and a free for all for business, carpet comes out as the most stable product as well. And, one more important factor, most all of it is made in the US and readily available.

If you have any questions on carpet performance, need help with a specification or with a performance issue, on any flooring material, contact us. We'll help keep you out of trouble and let you know what went wrong and why and how to fix it, if you have a flooring failure. And we always have the answers.

## **ANNOUNCEMENT—EVERYTHING CONCRETE!!!**



LGM and Associates is excited to announce that we have added a new associate to our team of experts.

Jennifer Fallor's, 24 years of expertise is in concrete flooring. Interior or exterior, decorative or utilitarian, her in-depth knowledge and experience of concrete surface preparation, concrete chemicals-including cure and seals, water repellents, densifiers and coatings, concrete repair, and finally polished concrete, for which she is known world-wide, will be an incredible asset to our clients and to the industry. When you are working with/on concrete she is your best friend; she will keep you out of trouble, get you out of trouble and provide answers to fix whatever happened and tell you why. Jennifer joins the team of Flooring experts with the Answers.

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