

eco3HOME

AHFA'S SAFETY, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM

The American Home Furnishings Alliance is a trade association of more than 400 companies, including over 240 manufacturers and distributors plus approximately 200 suppliers to the residential furnishings industry worldwide.

We believe the home furnishings industry has a responsibility to help manage our world's natural resources for future generations. Over the past 10 years, we have developed a series of three furniture industry-specific environmental programs designed to help our member companies implement sustainable business practices consistent with that responsibility.

All three programs now fall under the umbrella we call Eco3Home. Only products from companies that have implemented all three programs may carry the Eco3Home label.

A COMMITMENT AT THE CORE

The journey toward Eco3Home product registration begins with an environmental management program called EFEC that is implemented at the facility level – a factory, warehouse or office building. EFEC, or “Enhancing Furniture’s Environmental Culture,” requires that facility to analyze and better understand the environmental impact of its raw materials, core operations and finished products. This results in:

- Improved management of resources and raw materials
- Reduced energy and water consumption
- Reduced waste and increased recycling.

EFEC sets the course for a company’s environmental journey, because it works to change the culture within a company, from the factory floor to the executive suite. Employees drive the changes – and the results achieved in facilities across the United States have been profound.



This comprehensive environmental management program – which calls on participants to make continual improvements and undergo an annual maintenance audit to retain their registration – has been implemented by 11 companies in 42 different locations. Participating companies include Bassett, C.R. Laine, Century Furniture, Craftmaster, Fairfield Chair, Flexsteel (including DMI), Hickory Chair, Hooker (including Bradington Young and Sam Moore), La-Z-Boy Residential, La-Z-Boy Case Goods (including American Drew, Kincaid and Lea Industries) and Vaughan-Bassett. In addition, Furniture Brands International announced this year that 24 facilities operated by Lane, Thomasville, Broyhill, Henredon, Drexel Heritage, Maitland Smith, Pearson and Lane Venture, along with the Furniture Brands headquarters in St. Louis, Mo., will implement EFEC.

GOING GLOBAL

Once a company has implemented EFEC at all of its domestic facilities, it is eligible to continue its Eco3Home journey by entering the Sustainable by Design program.



For most companies, furniture production today involves relationships with overseas vendors and overseas factories. Sustainable by Design takes EFEC's culture of environmental stewardship and extends it throughout a company's global supply chain. Sustainable by Design companies must establish internal standards, practices and management systems that govern their own environmental performance, but they also must work to ensure their suppliers do the same. Sustainable by Design provides guidance for partnering with suppliers and helping them meet environmental goals. For example, the program establishes guidelines for maintaining credible documentation of raw materials, which helps facilitate a company's compliance with federal regulations such as the Lacey Act.

Sustainable by Design also requires participants to develop policies that define the company's commitment to social responsibility, including workers' rights and community relations. Finally, Sustainable by Design provides tools to help companies calculate a baseline carbon footprint so that they can begin to measure the impact of their improvements. The following companies have achieved Sustainable by Design registration: C.R. Laine, Kincaid, American Drew, Lea Industries, Hickory Chair and Century Furniture.

PRODUCT DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

The last mile of the Eco3Home journey requires manufacturers to provide safety, health and environmental information for each piece of furniture carrying the Eco3Home label. By creating a standardized format for reporting these details, AHFA intends to make it easy for consumers to evaluate products and make informed decisions when purchasing new furnishings.

The Eco3Home label identifies products that carry a safety, health and environmental promise from the manufacturer. Those promises include:

- **Safety:** Eco3Home products meet or exceed federal safety standards, as well as voluntary standards established by the industry as "best practices." This means an Eco3Home product must meet voluntary ASTM standards, like those created to help prevent furniture tip over, as well as Consumer Product Safety Commission standards, like those for bunk bed construction. Upholstered products must meet the voluntary UFAC fire safety standard.
- **Health:** Eco3Home products meet or exceed federal standards regulating the emission of unhealthy chemicals, such as formaldehyde, as well as the presence of unhealthy substances, such as lead. Further, Eco3Home products must use only paints, stains and finishes with low volatile organic compound (VOC) emissions and only fabrics and foams with no PBDEs (polybrominated diphenyl ethers, key ingredients in some flame retardant chemicals).
- **Environment:** All Eco3Home products are made by companies that are engaged in ongoing efforts to conserve water and energy, reduce waste and increase recycling. They have taken specific measures to "green" their supply chain and are using raw materials and construction techniques designed to have minimal impact on the environment.