



White Paper: Anti-Microbial Claims

In response to the COVID-19 virus pandemic, an unprecedented number of consumer goods are now being sold as antimicrobial or antimicrobial treated. It can be confusing to understand the difference between antibacterial, antiviral, antifungal, and antimicrobial and these words may give a false sense of security.

The EPA classifies all anti-microbials, anti-biotics, and disinfectants as pesticides. These substances or mixtures of substances are used to destroy or suppress the growth of harmful microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, or fungi on inanimate objects and surfaces. To learn more, [click here](#) for the EPA weblink.

There are a number of test methods available to evaluate the effectiveness of the suppression of bacteria and other microbes depending upon product type and end use. NALFA membership recognizes that the ISO 22196 test method is the most applicable method for testing antibacterial treated laminate flooring. This test method was chosen because it evaluates surface properties that impact the interior environment. It is important to note that this test method tests only the antibacterial efficacy against 2 bacteria: Staphylococcus Aureus and E-Coli, and that no conclusion can be made for other bacteria and virus. To date, there is not a recognized test method that tests an installed floor; ISO 22196 is performed on a small surface area for a single, uninstalled laminate plank.

If a floor product includes an antimicrobial claim, the additives that the manufacturer may include in its product would only protect the product from microbial growth during manufacture, transport and potentially during shelf life. Once the floor is installed, it must be routinely cleaned to maintain the antimicrobial efficacy. Soil accumulation on the surface of the flooring seals the antimicrobial under a film of dirt, making it ineffective. Refer to your manufacturer's guidelines for specifics on cleaning and care instructions.

Should you decide to purchase a laminate floor treated with an antimicrobial or not, nothing replaces routine cleaning.



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