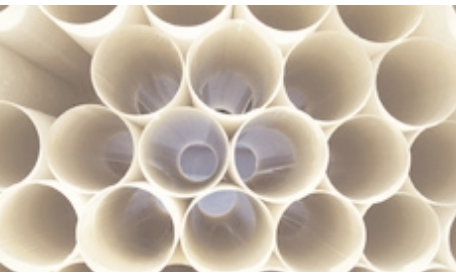


# Healthy Building News

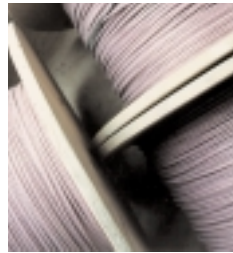


## New Studies Raise Concerns about PVC Additive Commonly Found in Vinyl Building Products

*“Phthalate” Softener May Interfere with Male Reproductive Tract Development*

**C**ertain chemicals linked to birth defects in animals are present in high levels in a number of consumer products, including vinyl building products such as vinyl flooring, roofing film, wall coverings and cables.

Hundreds of animal studies have demonstrated that phthalates can damage the liver, kidneys, lungs and reproductive system, especially the developing testes. Phthalates are used as a plastic softener and solvent in many different consumer products. They can be absorbed through the skin, inhaled as fumes, ingested when they contaminate food, or when children bite or suck on toys, and are inadvertently administered to patients by means of PVC (polyvinyl chloride or vinyl) medical devices.



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Ninety percent of all phthalates are used to soften polyvinyl chloride plastic. Phthalates were found in a wide variety of vinyl products including building materials and medical equipment, and also in cosmetics and personal hygiene products where they are used to make application easier.

According to one CDC study, five percent of women of reproductive age (an estimated two million women) may be absorbing up to 20 times more of the phthalate DBP than the average person in the population. The highest exposures for women of childbearing age were above the federal safety standard, creating a risk of reproductive birth defects, according to animal studies considered relevant to humans.

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### THE HEALTHY BUILDING INSPECTOR



#### **FAILS INSPECTION:**

**The Public Relations Society of America**, for awarding the Vinyl Institute its highest

honor, the Silver Anvil. The award winning *Vinyl By Design* campaign is a textbook corporate greenwash campaign to counter the growing body of evidence that vinyl is hazardous to the environment and human health. The program boasts extensive market research on architects and specifiers, and features an “ally development” component which pays professionals to be “vinyl ambassadors.” The award recognizes “exemplary skill, creativity and resourcefulness.”



#### **UP TO CODE:**

**The City of Philadelphia**, for refusing to alter its municipal plumbing code

to allow for the increased use of PVC pipes.

### HEALTHY BUILDING NEWS FAST FACT

#### **Dioxin Sources:**

The government usually measures dioxin emissions by reference to its “point source,” i.e., the smokestack or outfall pipe that delivers it to the environment. But when you look at what is being made or disposed of at the “point sources” such as incinerators, the evidence points to PVC plastic, vinyl, as the largest **material** source of dioxin to the environment.

## New Studies Raise Concerns

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

A report, released by the Health Care Without Harm coalition, warns that the regulatory limits set on phthalate exposure only take into account individual exposures to products, as opposed to the cumulative effects of multiple exposures via multiple products. Precise information about routes of human phthalate exposure has not been gathered. A 2000 CDC report found that the highest exposures to phthalates occur in women of childbearing age, a population most vulnerable to potential risks from phthalate exposure to an unborn child.

The vinyl industry has defended its use of phthalates by saying exposures from any given product are minimal. This documentation of widespread exposures at potentially harmful levels contradicts that logic.

In response to the new report, the Food and Drug Administration urged health care providers to consider PVC alternatives, at least for patients at highest risk such as newborn boys receiving intensive neo-natal care, boys in puberty undergoing dialysis, pregnant women with a male fetus, and mothers nursing baby boys. The FDA is expected to recommend that medical products be labeled if they contain phthalates.

## Blue Vinyl Available Now

The Award winning HBO documentary *Blue Vinyl* is now available for purchase and rental for private screenings from **Transit Media 800.343.5540.**



Nonprofit, grassroots and activist organizations are eligible for reduced rates: contact **Working Films** for information at **910.342.9000** or email [rwest@workingfilms.org](mailto:rwest@workingfilms.org).



PHOTO BY: CHRIS PILARO

## HEALTHY BUILDING NETWORK RESOURCES

### For more on PVC in building materials,

- <http://www.healthybuilding.net>

### For more on phthalates in medical devices,

- <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/safety/dehp.pdf>
- <http://ehpnet1.niehs.nih.gov/docs/2000/108p972-982blount/abstract.html>

### For a summary of what is known about human exposures to phthalates and the potential health impacts of exposure to real-world mixtures of these chemicals,

- [http://www.noharm.org/library/docs/Phthalate\\_Report.pdf](http://www.noharm.org/library/docs/Phthalate_Report.pdf)

### For a first-time look at phthalates in common personal care products,

- <http://www.nottoopretty.org>
- <http://www.comeclean.org>
- <http://www.ewg.org>

The Healthy Building Network is a project of the Institute for Self Reliance, [www.ilsr.org](http://www.ilsr.org). Media inquiries, contact Jeanette McCulloch at Valerie Denney Communications, 312.408.2580. For more information about the Healthy Building Network, see [www.healthybuilding.net](http://www.healthybuilding.net).