Drywall construction — requirements

The following notes are based on Criteria Lists 08007 Construction panels and 08009 Flexible sealants and pertain to the services listed in Service Group LG39 (Drywall construction work), as set out in the specifications for building construction. There is a separate information sheet for the services of the Service Group Raised access floors.

Construction panels

“ÖkoKauf Wien” has defined criteria for construction panels (drywall panels, wood-based panels). Plasterboard and gypsum fibreboard panels are required to comply with specified radioactivity limits, because plaster (especially recycled plaster from flue gas desulphurisation plants) may contain radon.

Wood-based panels must be proven to comply with emissions criteria for formaldehyde (industry standard “E 0.5”). Formaldehyde is a toxic, caustic, allergenic gas which several years ago was also classified as a carcinogenic substance by the World Health Organization; the binders used in wood-based materials are the main potential source of formaldehyde fumes.

Wood-based panels must also be proven to contain no tropical timbers or must have FSC certification, which shows that they come from sustainable forestry sources.

Flexible sealants

• **Silicone sealants** may give off oximes (2-butanonoxime) or amines: butanoxime is harmful to health; it is a suspected carcinogen and a contact allergen.

  Amines may react with other substances to form nitrosamines, which are harmful to health. Alternatives are acetoxy (acetic acid) or alcoxy silicone sealants, a large selection of which are offered by various manufacturers.

• **Acrylic and MS polymer (“hybrid”) sealants containing phthalate plasticisers should be avoided.** Phthalates are chemical substances that even in minimal quantities can be harmful to health. A number of substances in this group are known to have pseudo-hormonal effects and are therefore classified as being toxic to reproduction, others have not (yet) been studied. All of them are ecologically persistent and should therefore not be used. Phthalates classified as harmful have to be listed in product Safety Data Sheets; those not yet classified as harmful need not (yet) be listed. In the interests of precautionary health and environmental protection, phthalates should be generally avoided.

  The technical profile of silicone and acrylic sealants is so varied that substitute products can usually be easily sourced from a number of different manufacturers.

  → For further information, see the “ÖkoKauf Wien” information sheets “VOCs”, “Flexible sealants”, “Wood-based materials” and “Tropical timber”