

Zero VOC means no Volatile Organic Compounds – those long-chain hydrocarbons that contribute to interior air pollution and can combine with nitrogen oxides to form ground-level ozone – are released as the finish cures.



A zero-VOC finish is hard to find in the floor coating industry and we had been searching for one for a while. It's not exactly clear why the floor finishing business is so far behind the paint industry – VOC-free paints have been available in mainstream retail for at least two years.

Flooring finishes seem to rely heavily on those volatile petroleum-distillate-based solvents that keep the solids and resins in solution until applied but evaporate quickly to allow the finish to dry and cure in a reasonable time.

But mineral spirits and petroleum distillates release elevated levels of VOCs that can cause eye, skin, nose and throat irritation, and they are neurotoxins that may depress or damage the brain and nervous system. Short-term exposure to VOCs can cause dizziness, headache, drowsiness and nausea.

While you can use an ozone respirator to minimize your risk during the actual application of these finishes, the VOCs can linger in upholstery fabrics or curtains and even in the air after the finishes have dried.

Rubio Monocoat is a mixture of linseed oil and engineered waxes and its Material Safety Data Sheets list it as a non-hazardous substance containing 0 g/L VOCs (by

comparison, a typical gallon of a solvent-based polyurethane will release 3.8 pounds of volatile organic compounds into the air. Ouch.)



So, Monocoat delivers as non-toxic and highly sustainable finish. Its coverage rate is also fantastic, which means you do more with less product which reduces the energy needed to ship and handle the product. But does it work on floors? Read on:

Rubio Monocoat is a viable alternative to polyurethane only if it protects the floor. Carnauba wax, for example, is also a zero-VOC finish, but it is next to worthless as a floor protectant and so we won't sell or recommend it.