

Why PVC-Upholstered Furniture is Ideal for Healthcare Environments

*Standards from industry group aid in selection
of appropriate coated fabrics*

October 16, 2024—When hospitals and other healthcare facilities needed help sourcing durable coated fabric for patient chairs, public area guest chairs, task chairs, sofas, and recliners, the [Chemical Fabrics & Film Association – Performance Products Division](#) was there. The association created a new, identifiable standard to help designers, specifiers, and facility managers select materials compatible with newer, more stringent cleaning protocols.

During Covid, some coated fabrics used to upholster furniture in healthcare settings suffered premature product failure years before the expected service life due to the increased use of strong disinfectants. A number of healthcare facilities had deselected vinyl coated fabrics, switching to polyurethane products, many of which failed, leading to millions of dollars in losses. Facility managers soon came to recognize the value of vinyl coated fabrics in performance, aesthetics (print, emboss, haptics), and economics. In turn, the vinyl industry developed more disinfectant-resistant topcoats to withstand modern disinfecting protocols.

Facility managers began experiencing increased instances of cracking, color transfer, stretching and puddling, stickiness and softening, fraying, and more. It became clear that the fabrics industry needed a method of identifying materials able to withstand modern cleaning protocols.



In response, the Chemical Fabrics & Film Association – Performance Products Division developed a performance standard for the healthcare environments to help prevent common product failures caused by incorrect selection.

[Recommended Minimum Performance Standards for Vinyl Coated and Other Chemical Coated Upholstery Fabrics \(CFFA-HC-201\)](#) provides manufacturers and distributors of coated fabrics with a

certification mark to help specifiers, designers, and furniture manufacturers select appropriate coated fabrics for the healthcare environment. It requires that a coated fabric pass 16 tests to earn certification.

There are currently nearly [200 coated fabrics which have passed all 16 tests](#). While the standard cannot guarantee that a coated fabric will never fail, it provides significant information and assistance to help designers make informed selections.

For more information on the CFFA-PPD, visit <https://www.cffaperformanceproducts.org/>.

About Chemical Fabrics and Film Association – Performance Products Division

The Chemical Fabrics and Film Association (CFFA) is an international trade association representing manufacturers of polymer-based fabric and film products, which are processed in sheet form and either attached to a fabric backing (to make chemical fabrics) or used without backing (to make chemical films). Members of CFFA who belong to the Performance Products Division manufacture chemical fabrics and film used in numerous applications, such as contract upholstery, swimming pool liners, and transportation interiors. Industries across the globe rely on these vinyl performance products for their durability, versatility, and lasting value to make an array of products better.

CFFA offers a self-certification program for manufacturers and sellers of coated fabrics for [healthcare](#) that meet CFFA's Minimum Performance Standards for Vinyl-Coated and other Chemical Coated Upholstery Fabrics (CFFA-HC-201). The association also offers a self-certification program for manufacturers of vinyl film used for [inground swimming pool liners](#) that meets CFFA's Recommended Minimum Performance Standards for Vinyl Swimming Pool Liners - In-Ground (CFFA-P-101).