Technical Bulletin

Issue Date: March 2026

ETHYLENE GLYCOL

Ethylene glycol (EG) has historically been used in a variety of industrial and consumer applications because of its useful chemical and physical properties. In the coatings industry, it has commonly been used to help protect certain water-based paints from freezing and to support overall formulation stability. While EG can help maintain product stability and application properties, it has also received increased attention from regulators and environmental agencies because of its classification as a Hazardous Air Pollutant (HAP) and, in some jurisdictions, as a Toxic Air Contaminant (TAC).

As regulations and customer expectations continue to evolve, manufacturers and specifiers are placing greater emphasis on reducing or eliminating ingredients associated with air quality concerns.

What is EG?

Ethylene glycol is a colorless, odorless organic compound in the glycol family of chemicals. Ethylene glycol is a widely used chemical best known for its role in antifreeze and engine coolants, but it has also historically served important functions in water-based architectural coatings.

In water-based architectural paints, ethylene glycol has historically been used not only to improve freeze-thaw stability during storage and transportation, but also to help provide wet edge and open time during application. By slowing the rate of water evaporation, EG can help maintain workability for a longer period, allowing applicators more time to brush, roll, and blend the coating before it begins to set.

Environmental & Regulatory Considerations

Under the U.S. Clean Air Act, ethylene glycol is identified as a Hazardous Air Pollutant (HAP). HAPs are substances that are known or suspected to pose risks to human health or the environment and are therefore subject to regulatory attention in certain manufacturing and emissions contexts.

In addition, some air quality agencies, particularly in regions with more stringent environmental programs, also classify ethylene glycol as a Toxic Air Contaminant (TAC). These designations reflect broader efforts to evaluate and manage chemicals that may contribute to air quality concerns. Although the levels used in architectural paints are generally limited, growing awareness of indoor air quality, emissions, and ingredient disclosure has led manufacturers to explore alternative formulation technologies that reduce or eliminate the use of EG.

Vista Paint's Responsible Formulation

Vista Paint has taken an intentional approach to product development by formulating architectural coatings without intentionally added ethylene glycol. These products are identified as Non-EG

Certified, reflecting the company's commitment to responsible raw material selection and evolving market expectations.

Through careful review of formulation ingredients and the use of alternative technologies, Vista Paint is able to provide coatings that maintain stability and application performance without the use of EG. This approach supports the growing interest among architects, specifiers, contractors, and building owners in coatings designed to minimize ingredients associated with air quality concerns.

The Non-EG Certified designation provides added clarity for customers seeking products aligned with modern product stewardship and more informed material selection.

Key Takeaways

Ethylene glycol has historically been used in water-based paints to improve freeze–thaw stability and extend application workability. However, because EG is classified as a Hazardous Air Pollutant (HAP) and, in some regions, a Toxic Air Contaminant (TAC), its presence in coatings has become an increasing focus of regulatory agencies and customers concerned with indoor air quality and responsible material selection.

Advances in coating technology now allow manufacturers to design architectural paints that maintain performance characteristics—such as stability, application properties, and finish quality—without relying on ethylene glycol. As awareness of ingredients associated with air quality concerns continues to grow, many project teams are placing greater emphasis on coatings formulated with more thoughtful raw material choices.

Vista Paint supports this shift by formulating its architectural coatings without intentionally added ethylene glycol, designated as Non-EG Certified. This approach reflects Vista Paint's broader commitment to responsible formulation practices and to avoiding materials of concern whenever practical, while still delivering the performance professionals and consumers expect. By prioritizing careful ingredient selection and modern formulation strategies, Vista Paint continues to provide coatings designed not only to perform well, but also to support healthier and more responsible building environments.

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