

## PFAS

Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a broad class of synthetic fluorinated chemicals that have received increasing attention due to their resistance to breakdown in the environment and growing regulatory scrutiny. Because many PFAS compounds remain in the environment for long periods, they are often referred to as “forever chemicals.”

PFAS have been used in a wide range of industrial and consumer products because they provide properties such as water, oil, stain, and heat resistance. Common examples include non-stick cookware, stain-resistant carpets and upholstery, water-repellent textiles, certain food packaging, and some firefighting foams (Figure 1). As awareness of PFAS has increased, architects, specifiers, contractors, and building owners have begun asking more questions about where these materials may appear in construction products, including paints and coatings.



Figure 1

## What are PFAS?

PFAS are a large family of synthetic organic compounds that contain strong carbon-fluorine bonds. These bonds contribute to the chemical stability and durability that have made PFAS useful in many applications, but they also contribute to the concern surrounding their long-term presence in the environment.

This chemical class includes thousands of substances with different structures and functions. Some PFAS are small molecules used as surfactants, processing aids, or surface modifiers, while others are larger fluorinated polymers used in specialized applications. Because PFAS cover such a broad range of chemistries, not all PFAS behave the same way or serve the same purpose.

In architectural coatings, PFAS have historically been associated primarily with certain fluorinated additives, including fluorosurfactants, used at very low concentrations to modify surface properties. Depending on the formulation, these materials may have been used to improve wetting, flow and leveling, anti-blocking performance, or resistance to dirt and stains. In most cases, these additives affect surface behavior rather than serving as the primary binder of the coating.

It is important to distinguish these materials from fluoropolymer resins such as PVDF (polyvinylidene fluoride). PVDF is typically used in specialized, factory-applied coatings for architectural metal panels, curtain walls, and coil-coated components. While PVDF may fall within some broad PFAS definitions, it is not generally representative of the fluorinated additives historically associated with standard interior and exterior architectural paints.

When evaluating architectural coatings, the key question is whether the paint contains intentionally added fluorinated surfactants or similar PFAS-based additives.

## Environmental & Regulatory Considerations

Interest in PFAS has increased as regulators and environmental organizations evaluate their long-term environmental presence. As a result, PFAS are being reviewed across a wide range of product categories.

Although architectural coatings have generally not been identified as a major source of PFAS compared with some other industrial applications, the coatings industry has become part of the broader conversation surrounding product stewardship, environmental responsibility, and material transparency. Architects, specifiers, contractors, and building owners may therefore request information regarding PFAS content in construction materials.

Because PFAS represent a large and diverse class of chemicals, regulatory definitions and reporting expectations continue to evolve. Manufacturers must monitor supplier information, emerging guidance, and potential compliance requirements as regulatory frameworks develop.

## Vista Paint's Responsible Formulation

Vista Paint has taken a proactive approach to this issue by formulating its architectural coatings without intentionally added PFAS. This reflects the company's commitment to responsible formulation practices and careful raw material selection.



Vista Paint works closely with raw material suppliers to review the composition of ingredients used in its coating formulations. Through this process, the company evaluates materials that may be associated with PFAS chemistry and selects alternative technologies that support desired performance characteristics without relying on intentionally added PFAS compounds.

This approach helps align Vista Paint products with evolving customer expectations, environmental considerations, and regulatory developments.

## Key Takeaways

PFAS are a large class of fluorinated chemicals often referred to as “forever chemicals” because many resist breakdown and can remain in the environment for extended periods. In architectural coatings, PFAS have historically been associated primarily with fluorinated additives used in small amounts to modify surface properties, such as wetting, flow, and stain resistance. These additives should not be confused with fluoropolymer resins like PVDF, which are typically used in specialized factory-applied metal coatings rather than conventional architectural paints.

As awareness of PFAS continues to grow, the coatings industry is placing greater emphasis on raw material transparency, formulation practices, and long-term product stewardship. Vista Paint supports this effort by formulating its architectural coatings without intentionally added PFAS, providing customers with coatings designed to meet performance expectations while aligning with evolving industry and environmental considerations.

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