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## Miracle Sealants - Keeping It Green



Environmental awareness and taking steps to reduce our impact on Mother Earth has moved from the fringe to front and center. Corporate America has in the last decade taken unprecedented steps to “green” their practices, finding it not just good policy, but good business. Yet, as more and more products tout their green credentials, it opens the door for more and more misinformation.

Among the areas of misinformation is the generic labeling of certain terms and words to mean “green” or “toxic,” “friendly” or “unsafe.” Products labeled “natural” are assumed to be friendly, while those with words like “solvents” are stigmatized under the banner of harmful and dangerous. Consider, however, that many of the most toxic substances known like uranium, arsenic and lead in addition to a litany of fungi are all plentiful and naturally produced. Any of those in even the smallest quantities can be highly lethal. Therefore, while natural usually connotes non-toxicity, it is not strictly so.

What’s important to understand in the quest for green products is to consider a

variety of factors and processes at both the macro and micro level, and then balance the issues to reach a prudent compromise. For example, it may be more environmentally sound to utilize a product

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or process that is less environmentally sound once, if over the long term it reduces the uses of other damaging products or processes. In the end, the net impact to the earth is greener.

As a California-based company, Miracle Sealants falls under stricter environmental protection guidelines than those operating elsewhere in the country. Yet by regulation

or not, we are committed to sound environmental policies within our practices.

One area where the green debate is the loudest arises from the conflict of solvent-based versus water-based products. Generally, the solvent-based products get the short end of the stick from environmental advocates. Miracle Sealants offers their industry-leading 511 line of sealers in both water and solvent base. Why opt for one over the other, and is the water-base better for the environment? Read on to learn more.

First, a quick lesson in molecular biology. What are solvents, and why use them anyway? A solvent, is, simply, a liquid other than water used to dissolve a solid into a fully liquid form. Solvents work by transporting the dissolved solid to the intended target and then, via evaporation, the solid bonds to the target with the solvent now gone. The evaporated solvent becomes airborne which is where the term Volatile Organic Compound or VOC comes into play. VOCs are compounds like Trichlorethane 111, ketones, aldehydes, mineral spirits and alcohol, and they are what’s at issue with solvents. Solvents high in VOCs are harmful to the environment and our health. But, not all solvents contain high amounts of VOCs and not all VOCs are equally as damaging.

Water-based products function similarly to solvent-based products, yet differ in two key ways. Both leave behind the intended dissolved solid via the process of evaporation. Water evaporates by releasing hydrogen and oxygen into the air, which we all know are essential ingredients to life. Contrary to popular belief however, while the water itself contains no VOCs in water-based products they do emit the same VOCs from the polymers used to create the sealant as do solvent-based products.

## Miracle Sealants - Keeping It Green (Cont.)

It should be pointed out here, that Miracle Sealants 511 Impregnator in solvent base rates 1 on the HMIS scale of toxicity from 0-4 (4 being most harmful), equivalent to laundry detergent. Still, it would appear that water base wins the environmental debate. Not so fast.

The second difference between solvent and water-based products is how they work.

Solvents are engineered to penetrate the surfaces of intended application, whereas water depends on the inherent porousness of the intended application surface. When the surface is non-porous, water-based products can only leave behind a film on the surface. Solvents, on the other hand, can penetrate non-porous surfaces to reach deep within the substrate, creating a thicker barrier, and here's how low VOC solvents get back on terms with water-based products. Plus, a solvent-based product can be cross-linked, or cured, to offer the best durability; thus, last longer and protect better since they can't be scrubbed off from cleaning and wear like water-based products can. The result is a reduced need for reapplication with much longer intervals. Moreover, cleaning is now much more viable with simple water and mild detergent rather than harsher more powerful cleansers that may be higher in VOC or need to be applied more frequently. Plus, mild detergents require less water to wash away than the powerful cleansers.

Other considerations include the fact that solvent-based products typically allow for much better coverage, meaning less total product is necessary and that means less packaging that ends up in landfills, reduced shipping bulk, and reduced manufacturing volume.

Over the years, here's what we've learned about the efficacy of solvent based impregnators/sealers:

- Limestone importers benefit from increased sales of stone product in applications where before they couldn't since sealed limestone is now resistant to stains.
- Contractors no longer charge for the use of an impregnator/sealer as a grout release because it saves 45% in labor costs associated with grout removal since they do not have to come back a second day for an acid wash.
- Janitorial staffs spend 40% less time cleaning and maintaining restroom, shower and kitchen areas because clean-up is now easier with sealed stone and tile.

So as you can see, the net negative effect to the environment is potentially reduced when using the low VOC solvent-based product. Make the best green decision by considering all of the

factors before choosing a water versus solvent based product including total area, ventilation in the area as well as the use frequency and impact of area to be sealed. Either way, Miracle Sealants offers you the choice between solvent and water-based products. That's how we keep it green.

### What An Impregnator/Penetrating Sealer Does

An impregnator/penetrating sealer will resist water, oils, grease, mold, mildew, algae, efflorescence, graffiti, grout dyes, mortar haze, acid rain, atmospheric dirt, lime deposits, soap scum and other penetrating items. Additionally, they make surfaces less slippery, harder, allow for water vapor transmission and do not change the natural appearance of stone and tile. Plus they make cleaning and maintenance easier.

**20% OFF** **511 Kleen & Reseal Spray**  
*Cleans and reseals in one easy step.*  
*Receive an additional 20% off until June 15.*

Miracle Sealants, manufacturer of "The Original Impregnator" 511 Impregnator, is proud to announce the introduction of 511 Kleen & Reseal Spray. Our customers have asked for a product that can be used on counters in conjunction with the 511 Sealers/Enhancers to clean, rejuvenate and reinforce the existing base of protection, making the surfaces easier to clean and 511 Kleen & Reseal fits that need perfectly.

511 Kleen & Reseal will remove most common household dirt and grime on counter tops. 511 Kleen & Reseal contains 511 H2O+ so every time you use the product you reinforce the protection of the sealer already in place. 511 Kleen & Reseal has a pleasant fragrance and is an easy to use spray and wipe product. Seal the surface first using the appropriate 511 product, and then use 511 Kleen & Reseal as needed for ongoing cleaning and re-sealing.

511 Kleen & Reseal is good for use on all natural stone and tile including, but not limited to, marble, granite, limestone, travertine, slate, lapis, tiger eye, malachite, porcelain ceramic tile, glazed ceramic tile, mosaic tile, glass tile, acrylic tile and more...

For more information go to: [www.miraclesealants.com](http://www.miraclesealants.com) or call 800-350-1090/626-443-6433 and ask for assistance.

## U.S. Housing Market Showing Some Signs of Life



According to a report published April 1 by Reuters, the U.S. housing market is beginning to show some signs of sustainable recovery. While the numbers are far from where we'd like them to be, there are, at least, signs that the bottom has been hit and the pendulum has begun its swing in the other direction.

According to the The National Association of Realtors' (NAR) pending home sales index (PHSI) rose in February to 82.1, in line with economists expectations of a rise to 82.0 and higher than the 80.4 reading in January. The index rose 2.1% in February, and is just 1.4% lower than the February 2008 reading.

NAR Chief Economist Lawrence Yun acknowledged that more time would be needed before it becomes clear the market is in an upswing, but still some good news is better than more bad news.

"More buyers are getting into the market to take advantage of stimulus incentives and much improved housing affordability conditions, but it will take a few months before we could see this turn up in measurable sales contract activity," he said

Michael T Darda, a chief economist at MKM Partners points to additional data that shows housing affordability to be back to

2001 levels. Greater affordability means that the balance between rentals and home buying will swing back in the buyers favor.

"The Case-Schiller Home-Price indexes continued to show rapid price declines in January. The CS 10-City Index fell 2.5% month over month in January and is down a record 19.4% from last year's levels. Similarly, the CS 20-City Index fell 2.8%

### More buyers are getting into the market to take advantage of stimulus incentives and much improved housing affordability conditions

month over month in January and is down a record 18.97% year over year," he said, adding, "However, the steep declines in home prices along with a 200-basis-points decline in conforming mortgage rates from peak 2008 levels have combined to drive housing affordability to record levels."

Darda went on to say.

"We thus continue to believe home sales bottomed in January and that housing prices will level out later in 2009. Yes, lending terms are still stringent and the

labor market is still weak. But as we've pointed out before, the labor market tends to lag housing cycles, not lead them (jobless claims tend to lag new-home sales by six months historically). Moreover, the net fraction of banks tightening terms for prime-mortgage loans peaked last year along with mortgage rates and has since receded. So, at the margin, higher housing affordability is colliding with better credit conditions. This is a powerful combination that we believe will create a bottom in the housing market in 2009. Once inventory-to-sales ratios fall back to seven to eight months, an end to home-price deflation will be imminent."

All of this data falls in line with evidence that mortgage applications are on the rise with new home purchases outweighing re-finance applications in the first week of April.

### The Miracle Sealants Economic Stimulus Package

*Reminder that we are all in this together.*

The Miracle Sealant stimulus package is still in effect. We're reducing the minimum order quantities for distributor discounts and reducing our pre-paid freight policy to help reduce your costs and add some flexibility on cash flow for our distributors and vendors. And, if you're planning any sales events for your customers, we'd like to offer some help.

**Distributor Minimum Order Quantities**  
Was \$10,000 / year, **NOW** \$5,000 / year

**Distributor Pre-Paid Freight Minimums**  
Was \$1,950 / order, **NOW** \$1,000 / order