

WOODEN-FRAMED SEATING AND TABLES

Frequently Asked Questions about wooden-framed seating and tables

1. Origin:

- 1.1. Which types of wood does Kusch + Co process for its frames and components?** We process solely beechwood for the production of our seating and table frames. Even the plywood and multiplex seat shells of our metal- and wooden-framed seating are made of beech. On customer's request, we process other types of wood for the visible veneer layer.
- 1.2. Are proofs of origin available stating that the raw material of our wooden-framed products originates from sustainable forest cultivation?** Yes. 100 % of our beechwood originates from PEFC certified suppliers. All non-exotic veneers for our table tops in the standard collection (beech, oak, maple, ash, pear, walnut, cherry) are only ordered from PEFC or FSC certified suppliers. Wood types, such as wenge or mahogany, do not originate from illegal logging, proofs of origin are available on request. Careful attention is paid to the fact that at least 70 % of our table top material originates from PEFC certified forest cultivation.
- 1.3. How does Kusch + Co make sure that illegal logging is excluded as source for its wooden-framed products?** Kusch + Co is the first woodworking company of the contract furniture industry to obtain the PEFC certificate. An unbroken chain of custody, proving that the raw material does not originate from illegal logging, is a prerequisite for the certification. We only buy and accept plywood seat shells from PEFC or FSC certified suppliers. All suppliers without the PEFC certification have to sign a declaration of conformity, stating that the raw material originates from legal forest cultivation.
- 1.4. Is it possible to use rapidly renewable materials for the wooden-framed products?** No, not at Kusch + Co. We only process raw material from sustainable forest cultivation where the timber is selected by experts. High-quality beech needs a growth time of at least 80 years before the forester will allow the felling. The forester guarantees that there is a balance between de- and reforestation. We do not support plantations which usually cultivate rapidly growing trees with a lesser quality that leach out the soil.
- 1.5. How does Kusch + Co optimize the energy consumption needed for the wood drying process?** The solid timber planks are stacked outdoors and covered for the predrying process and to protect them against rain and snow. In this way, most of the water can escape naturally through evaporation or drying. The data regarding the felling and delivery dates are entered into our computer-controlled stock management, so that we know when we can start processing the wood. We do not dry the entire plank. Before the drying process, we cut off all parts that are unsuitable for our production and use these parts to heat our factory, thus reducing the volume of wood that has to be dried.



2. Environmental impact caused by hazardous substances?

- 2.1. Does Kusch + Co process its wooden-framed products with environmentally hazardous adhesives and glues?** No. We use a 95 % water-based PVAC glue for our wooden seating. In some cases, we use a 2-component adhesive for reasons of stability. When the 2-component adhesives have hardened, they are no longer hazardous and do not require separate waste disposal.
- 2.2. Does Kusch + Co use environmentally hazardous lacquers for the finish of its wooden-framed products?** No. We use UV-curing, water-based lacquer as standard, meeting the most stringent requirements stipulated in the norms EN 71-3 Toy Safety Standard and EN 53160-1. On express request by the customer only are we willing to deviate from this standard?
- 2.3. What is the level of formaldehyde in the composite materials, f.i. formed parts?** Multiple tests prove that our seat shells have a formaldehyde level below 0.1 ppm or less than 3.5 mg/hm³ in conformity with the DiBt directive 100. Our suppliers have the plywood products tested on hazardous substances by an independent laboratory. The results are documented and accessible to everyone.



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2. Environmental impact caused by hazardous substances?

2.4. Does our wood, including tops or veneers, contain any hazardous substances?

No. We do not process impregnated wood or veneers.

We rely on the data of our suppliers with regard to the top material. We only accept and process table tops with a E1 formaldehyde level in conformity with EN 120 of the DiBt directive 100. The norms EN 717-1 and 717-2 merely describe other test procedures to determine the formaldehyde level in accordance with the DiBt directive 100. The compliance with the directive EN 120 makes all the other norms redundant.
> cf question 2.3



3. Transportation:

3.1. How does Kusch+Co minimize the transport route for its supplies?

Kusch + Co buys its timber planks in several thicknesses from suppliers within a radius of max. 100 km of the production site in Hallenberg. Our suppliers of solid wood guarantee a consistent quality level while optimizing the transport route. All suppliers are PEFC certified and guarantee that the wood originates from sustainable forest cultivation.



3.2. Does Kusch+Co use public transportation?

As there is no train connection (Deutsche Bahn) with our sole production site in Hallenberg, transportation by trucks is indispensable for delivering our goods.

4. Recycling:

4.1. Is it possible to reuse or recycle the wooden-framed products by Kusch + Co?

Yes. All materials are separated by material type. All wooden-framed seating and tables have a recyclability of at least 95 % and are free from any hazardous substances whatsoever. It is usually possible to extend the seating's life cycle after thorough cleaning and after refreshing the lacquer coating.

4.2. How are the wood residues from the production department at Kusch+Co recycled?

All organic wood scraps are root-and-branch thermally recycled into heating energy in our approved heating installation. The generated energy is used to heat our production department and the administrative department. This measure allowed us to reduce our heating oil consumption by 660,000 liters over the past six years, equivalent to a reduction in CO₂ emissions of round about 2 million kg.



4.3. Is it possible to quantify the percentage of recycled material in our table tops?

Yes. Both our main suppliers have indicated an average percentage of 65 % of recycled material in their chipboards. The ratio of softwood to hardwood is approx. 80 % to 20 %.

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5. Production:

5.1. How does Kusch + Co minimize the waste quantity of lacquer sludge, lacquer residues and other lacquer waste?

We do not process pigmented lacquer to produce our stained frames, as the residues of redundant lacquer have to be treated like hazardous waste.

We have been lacquering our seating and tables with water-based lacquer since 1989. With our lacquer-in-lacquer system, we are able to recuperate 50 tonnes of lacquer every year. A positive side effect is that this procedure drastically reduces the difficult waste disposal of environmentally hazardous lacquer sludge. Less than 1% of the lacquer has to be disposed of as waste material which is thermally recycled into energy by an accredited waste disposal company in keeping with the legal environmental specifications.

The waste disposal company will convert the lacquer residues in combination with other combustible materials into derived fuels which are used f.i. in the cement industry.



5.2. Does Kusch + Co comply with the European directives on VOC (1999/13/EG) (Volatile Organic Compounds)?

Yes. The limit values for companies in the furniture industry that lacquering wood and wood components are restricted to 15,000 resp. 25,000 VOC solvent particles p.a. For values of 15,000 p.a and more, these companies have to inform the public authorities about their measures to reduce the number of particles or install extraction units. Kusch + Co's solvent report of 2008 states that its emission amounts to 9,500 kg. This figure is so low because Kusch + Co uses water-based lacquer. As a result, Kusch + Co is not obliged to implement regulatory measures. Yet, on a voluntary basis, we are always looking for ways to reduce our measurement values even further and to improve the working conditions for our staff.

6. Packaging:

6.1. How much packaging material is used and how much is reusable?

Depending on the model, as many products as possible are wrapped up in blankets and bubble wrap in the case of a direct delivery. The cardboard boxes, which are already made of recycled paper, are subsequently recycled again by Interseroh as stipulated in our dual waste disposal agreement with the certificate number 11683. The agreement also applies to packaging material such as bubble wrap and cardboard which are also entirely made of recyclable materials. If possible, blankets made of recycled materials are used to reduce the volume of bubble wrap.



7. Usage:

7.1. Do ready Kusch + Co products have any known negative impact on the environment?

No. We are not aware of any negative impact. Our products, lacquers or fabrics will not set free hazardous emissions during their life cycles. During the physical UV curing process of the wood lacquer, all the pores are closed and the coating gains its final solidity. Therefore, no emissions are set free, as might be the case with other chemically curing lacquers.



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8. Biodegradable products:

8.1. Do Kusch + Co products contain biodegradable components?

Yes. All solid wood components are biodegradable after mechanical processing. On customer's request, we can use compostable fabrics.



9. Standards:

9.1. Which external certificates can Kusch + Co provide for its materials?

- DIN EN ISO 9001:2000 certified since 1994 (Quality Management), DIN EN ISO 14001:2005 (Environment)
- We meet all the requirements of OHSAS 18001 (Occupational Health and Safety)
- PEFC certified as wood-processing company and for its products
- Most of our products have received the GS certificate for Tested Product Safety from TÜV Rheinland (cf website)
- Some products have obtained the Ergonomics certificate
- Quality Office Certificates (cf website)
- One product has obtained the CE mark within the framework of the declaration of conformity for medical products (Tested Medical Product)
- LGA toxproof



9.2. Does Kusch + Co issue internal certificates?

By reason of the Product Liability Act, we have all our products thoroughly tested. We adopt the same test procedures as if we would apply for the GS certificate for Tested Product Safety. In case a product does not possess the official GS mark, we issue an internal certificate. This certificate always specifies the standards used for the tests which are congruent with the requirements of the GS certificate. Irrespective of this, our Quality Assurance Department will randomly test whether the products that are currently produced in our factories meet all the quality standards.

9.3. How do the Factory Test Certificates issued by Kusch + Co compare to external certificates?

Kusch + Co has been certified in accordance with DIN EN ISO 9001 since 1994, authorizing us to issue "factory test certificates" or "manufacturer's declarations" for internally tested products. The factory certificates list all the standards on the basis of which our products have to meet the quality requirements. Our Quality Assurance team, an integral part of our quality management system in accordance with DIN EN ISO 9001, validates the certificates. The manufacturer's declarations are equivalent to Material Safety Data Sheets, as such, external testing is not necessary.