

Emission Classification of Building Materials, General rules

12.10.2023

These obligatory General rules describe the principles of the Finnish Emission Classification of Building Materials.

1 EMISSION CLASSIFICATION OF BUILDING MATERIALS

The Emission Classification of Building Materials is primarily intended for building materials, furniture and fixtures used in residential spaces and office premises. The classification activity is based on the document [Classification of Indoor Environment 2018](#), and current classification criteria and principles.

The Emission Classification is owned by Rakennustietosäätiö RTS sr and operated by its subsidiary Rakennustieto Oy who, among other things, issues the classification certificates. Both Classification of Indoor Environment and Emission Classification are developed and supervised by the principal committee Indoor Environment (PT 41), appointed by the Director General of Rakennustietosäätiö RTS sr. The multidisciplinary committee is comprised of professionals from various fields, and its objective is to promote building methods and classifications aiming at good indoor environment.

Classification applications and matters relating to classification decisions are handled confidentially by a separate classification committee working under the principal committee Indoor Environment (PT 41). The impartial classification committee consists of a representative of Finnish Society of Indoor Air Quality and Climate (Sisäilmäyhdistys ry), at least one technical expert, and a representative of Rakennustieto Oy as the secretary of the committee.

2 APPLYING FOR EMISSION CLASSIFICATION

Applications for Emission Classification are submitted to Rakennustieto Oy using an online application form. The application process is described in detail on the [Emission Classification's website](#). Applications shall include product information, product data sheet or equivalent, instructions for use, material safety data sheet (if applicable), and test report (see section 9). At the time of submitting the application the test report shall not be more than one (1) year old. Applications for classification of a product group (see section 8) shall include required formulation and/or composition specifics. The applicant may, if necessary, be asked to provide supplementary information for their application. By applying for the Emission Classification, the applicant commits to these General rules. All classification applications are evaluated in accordance with the current testing requirements and the classification criteria set for the products.

2.1 Confidentiality of application documents

Rakennustieto Oy and the classification committee process all documents and information relating to applications confidentially. However, upon approval, the product name and the holder of the classification are published in the database of emission-classified products (see section 12).

2.2 Different application types

In addition to the new classification application described in section 2, the classification process also involves other types of applications. All application types and the documentation needed for each are described in detail on the [Emission Classification's website](#).

> Rakennustietosäätiö RTS sr
Malminkatu 16 A
PL 1004, 00101 Helsinki
Puh. +358 29 309 3100
rts@rakennustieto.fi
Y-tunnus: 0201937-0

> The Building Information Foundation RTS sr
Malminkatu 16 A
PO Box 1004, FI-00101 Helsinki, Finland
Tel. +358 29 309 3100
rts@rakennustieto.fi
Business ID: FI02019370

> Bygginformationsstiftelsen RTS sr
Malmgatan 16 A
PB 1004, FI-00101 Helsingfors, Finland
Tel. +358 29 309 3100
rts@rakennustieto.fi
FO-nummer: FI02019370

3 RIGHT TO USE THE CLASSIFICATION LABEL AND THE VALIDITY OF THE RIGHT TO USE

The holder of the classification (i.e. the company to which the Emission Classification certificate has been issued) has the right to market the emission-classified product using the classification label and by referring to the Emission Classification. The use of the classification label is instructed in detail in section 4.

The right to use the classification label is valid for three (3) years from the granting of the classification. If the composition of the product and method of manufacturing have not changed, the classification can be continued once with a continuation application for another three (3) years without retesting. Continuation without retesting can be approved only if the testing methods and the classification criteria or principles have not changed fundamentally since the original testing and approval. The minimum retesting frequency is six (6) years upon renewal of the classification. If, for reasons beyond the manufacturer's control, the required retesting cannot be completed in time for the renewal application, the classification committee may, based on the manufacturer's request, grant a temporary extension to the classification, following case-by-case consideration.

4 USE OF CLASSIFICATION LABEL

4.1 Product labelling

In online content, products, packaging, data sheets, brochures, etc. the emission class assigned to the product is indicated with the M1 or M2 classification label. Transferable stickers of the classification label may not be produced, and the label must always be part of printed entity. Products approved for the emission class M1 are entitled to use the M1 label (Figure 1) which is a registered trademark of Rakennustietosäätiö RTS sr. If needed, the previous classification label (Figure 2) may be used during the transition period until the end of year 2026. The classification label (Figure 3) that was decommissioned in 2020 may be used during the transition period until the end of year 2024. Both the classification label and the classification certificate are available in multiple languages. Different emission classes have their own classification labels.



Figure 1. Valid M1 Emission Classification label (in English), introduced on 1 October 2023.



Figure 2. M1 Emission Classification label (in English), decommissioned on 1 October 2023.



Figure 3. M1 Emission Classification label (in English), decommissioned in 2020.

In addition, the product description must highlight the restrictions related to the use of the product and its intended use, as well as factors resulting in increased emissions, such as:

- applications, suitability
- substrate requirements (e.g. humidity and temperature)
- preliminary treatments
- operational safety
- packaging
- transportation
- storage (e.g. storage conditions and packaging method)

- instructions for use and installation
- cleaning instructions (e.g. detergent pH requirements)
- environmental protection and waste management

4.2 Product marketing

The classification label can be used for marketing of the emission-classified product alone. Only the products and product names marked on the classification certificate are classified. The classification label must not be used in such a way that it refers to the company as a whole or to products which have not been granted the Emission Classification.

5 QUALITY ASSURANCE AND OBLIGATION TO NOTIFY OF CHANGES

The quality control and assurance of emission-classified products is the responsibility of the holder of the classification. The holder of the classification is responsible for ensuring that the classified product has an approved quality assurance system. The holder of the classification is required to notify Rakennustieto Oy in advance of changes concerning the product's manufacturing methods, composition, etc., if the changes affect the properties for which the classification criteria apply to.

6 RESPONSIBILITY FOR CLASSIFIED PRODUCT

The holder of the classification is solely responsible for ensuring that the product meets the requirements set for it. Rakennustietosäätiö RTS sr or Rakennustieto Oy are not responsible for the classified product or for the properties declared for the product by the holder of the classification.

7 TERMINATION OR REVOKING OF THE RIGHT TO USE THE CLASSIFICATION LABEL

Both Rakennustieto Oy and the holder of the classification can terminate the classification and right to use the classification label to expire three (3) months after the termination. Rakennustieto Oy can cancel the right to use the classification and the classification label without a notice period to end immediately in cases of misuse or if it becomes clear that the classification criteria are no longer met. If Rakennustieto Oy has a legitimate reason to suspect that the classified product does not meet the requirements set for it, the holder of the classification must prove that the requirements are met with new test results in accordance with section 9.

8 PRODUCT GROUPING

If the products to be classified are very similar in terms of use and physical and chemical properties, they can be classified as a product group. Product grouping is done by the classification committee based on detailed composition and property information before the testing phase. Product grouping requires that sufficiently comprehensive compositional information is provided for the classification committee. When forming the product group, the classification committee decides which product or products shall be tested as product group representative. The product groups and products to be tested are re-evaluated in the classification committee upon renewal of the Emission Classification. The product grouping process is described and instructed in more detail on the [Emission Classification's website](#).

9 PRODUCT TESTING

The granting of an Emission Classification requires product testing by an approved testing laboratory. Laboratory tests must be renewed at least every six (6) years when applying for a renewal of the Emission Classification. The need for retesting caused by changes in the product and/or its manufacturing process described in section 5 is assessed by the classification committee on a case-by-case basis.

9.1 Sampling

The collection, packaging, and delivery of the product sample to the testing laboratory shall be carried out in accordance with the valid [testing protocol](#) and the instructions given by the testing laboratory. Sampling is documented with a sampling report, which is attached to the testing report.

9.2 Testing laboratory

Emission testing and analyses shall be carried out by a qualified and impartial laboratory approved by the classification committee. The list of approved laboratories can be found on the [Emission Classification's website](#).

9.3 Testing methods

Preparation of test specimens, collection of emission samples, as well as the analyses and measurements shall be carried out in accordance with the valid [testing protocol](#). The test report shall include the information determined by the testing protocol.

The products are tested for the following properties:

- total emission of volatile organic compounds (total volatile organic compounds, TVOC)
- emissions of individual volatile organic compounds (VOCs) according to the valid [EU-LCI list](#)
- formaldehyde (HCOH) emission
- ammonia (NH₃) emission
- emissions of volatile carcinogenic compounds according to Annex VI of Regulation (EC) No. 1272/2008
- odour

More detailed classification criteria for emission classes with limit values are described on the [Emission Classification's website](#).

10 FEES

10.1 Classification fee and other fees related to the Emission Classification

The applicant shall pay Rakennustieto Oy the valid classification fee for the Emission Classification and any other fees related to the granting of the classification. The up-to-date list of fees confirmed by Rakennustieto Oy can be found on the [Emission Classification's website](#).

10.2 Testing fees and expenses

The applicant is responsible for all costs arising from the tests required for the classification application. The applicant pays the testing costs, determined by the testing laboratory, directly to the testing laboratory.

11 COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

If the applicant wants to appeal the decision regarding the denial of the Emission Classification and the right to use the classification label, the applicant shall submit a written appeal to Rakennustieto Oy within 14 days of receiving the decision.

12 LIST OF CLASSIFIED PRODUCTS

Rakennustieto Oy maintains and publishes a database of emission-classified products and classification holders on the [Emission Classification's website](#).

13 CONTROL SAMPLING OF CLASSIFIED PRODUCTS

The quality of emission-classified products is controlled by a spot test procedure. The classification committee selects the products to be tested annually by lottery. Rakennustieto Oy pays the testing costs of the products selected for the spot test. The test results of the spot test remain in the possession of Rakennustieto Oy. The evaluation of the results of the spot test takes place confidentially in the classification committee.

If the requirements of the classification are not met in the spot test, the holder of the classification has the opportunity to demonstrate the product's conformity by testing the product again at their own expense within three (3) months of receiving the failed test result. Otherwise, the product's Emission Classification and the right to use the classification label will be revoked.

14 CONFIRMING AND CHANGING OF THE GENERAL RULES

These General rules have been confirmed by the Director General of Rakennustietosäätiö RTS sr on 12.10.2023. Rakennustietosäätiö RTS sr can change these General rules if necessary.

15 REFERENCES

Classification of Indoor Environment 2018: Target values, design guidance and product requirements

Emission Classification's website, available at: <https://ymparisto.rakennustieto.fi/en/emission-classification-of-building-materials>

Testing protocol M1 *Emission Classification of Building Materials: Protocol for Chemical and Sensory Testing of Building Materials*, available at: <https://ymparisto.rakennustieto.fi/en/emission-classification-of-building-materials>

EU-LCI list *Agreed EU-LCI values*, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/sectors/construction/eu-lci-sub-group_en

Rakennustietosäätiö RTS sr

Markku Hedman
Director General