

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA  
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**

**COMMISSIONERS:**      **Edith Ramirez, Chairman**  
                                 **Jon Leibowitz**  
                                 **Julie Brill**  
                                 **Maureen K. Ohlhausen**  
                                 **Joshua D. Wright**

	)	
<b>In the Matter of</b>	)	
	)	
<b>PPG ARCHITECTURAL</b>	)	<b>Docket No. C-4385</b>
<b>FINISHES, INC.,</b>	)	
<b>a corporation.</b>	)	
	)	
	)	

**COMPLAINT**

The Federal Trade Commission, having reason to believe that PPG Architectural Finishes, Inc. (“PPG” or “respondent”) has violated provisions of the Federal Trade Commission Act, and it appearing to the Commission that this proceeding is in the public interest, alleges:

1. Respondent is a Delaware corporation with its principal office or place of business at 1 PPG Place, Pittsburgh, PA 15272. Respondent is a subsidiary of PPG Industries, Inc., a Pennsylvania corporation with its principal office or place of business at the same address. Respondent does business under its own name as well as the names “PPG,” “Pittsburgh Paints,” “Porter Paints,” and “Olympic.”
2. Respondent manufactures, advertises, offers for sale, sells, and distributes paint products, including PPG *Pure Performance* paints. Respondent distributes these paint products to its own stores, independent distributors, and retailers.
3. The acts and practices of respondent alleged in this complaint have been in or affecting commerce, as “commerce” is defined in Section 4 of the Federal Trade Commission Act.
4. Typically, a paint retailer will tint a base paint with colorant in order to produce the paint color desired by the customer. Retailers of *Pure Performance* paints typically provide customers with the option of tinting the base paint to a PPG-formulated color prior to purchase and at no additional charge.
5. Both base paints and colorants may contain volatile organic compounds (“VOCs”). Tinting can significantly increase the VOC level of a paint.
6. Respondent has disseminated or has caused the dissemination of promotional materials

for its *Pure Performance* paints, including print advertisements, website advertisements, and point-of-sale materials to its own stores, independent distributors, and retailers. *See, e.g.*, Exhibits A through E. Respondent, as well as its stores, independent distributors, and retailers, have disseminated or have caused the dissemination of these promotional materials to consumers.

7. In numerous instances, respondent has represented that *Pure Performance* paints contain “Zero VOCs,” including but not limited to the following statements or depictions:

**A. PPG Printed Promotional Material:**

# ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED PAINT

- ZERO VOC
- VERY LOW ODOR—PAINT  
TODAY, OCCUPY TONIGHT
- DURABLE, WASHABLE,  
BEAUTIFUL
- PAINT “GREEN”  
IN ANY COLOR

Exhibit A.

**B. PPG Printed Promotional Material:**

*pure performance*<sup>®</sup>

**ENVIRONMENTALLY GENTLE**

**SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE**

.....

**ZERO VOCs**

Contains no volatile organic compounds (VOC), eliminating detrimental impact on air quality

**PAINT “GREEN” IN ANY COLOR**

Available in over 1,800 clean, vibrant colors from the Voice of Color<sup>®</sup> design system

.....

Exhibit B.

**C. PPG’s Website:**

*pure*  
*performance*®

It’s a concept that few manufacturers have managed to pull off. We, however, managed it beautifully. A paint that’s environmentally gentle yet still offers superior performance. Pure Performance®, with zero VOC and low odor, its exceptional quality transforms any interior space.

....

**Description**

Certified as a top quality paint by the Master Painters® Institute (MPI), Pure Performance® is safe for all painting projects and guarantees professional results every time you use it.

- Zero Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC)

....

**Available Colors**

Tints to all 1,890 colors in The Voice of Color® System. **More info**

**THE VOICE OF COLOR®**  
**PPG PITTSBURGH PAINTS**

Exhibit C ([www.ppgpittsburghpaints.com](http://www.ppgpittsburghpaints.com)).

**D. Script of 60-Second Radio Advertisement:**

Did you know it’s possible to paint your room today and occupy it tonight – with no unpleasant or lingering odors? It is possible when you choose *Pure Performance* by PPG. *Pure Performance* is THE environmentally preferred paint – with very low odor and ZERO VOCs. And it offers superior hiding, washability, and stain removal. With *Pure Performance* you don’t have to sacrifice being “green” for premium quality... which is why so many hospitals, schools and healthcare facilities demand *Pure Performance* for their jobs. And *Pure Performance* is available in nearly 2000 colors in the *Voice of Color* palette, not just the handful of colors offered by some other environmental paints. For better products, better service, better color tools and better results, head to your PPG *Pittsburgh* Paints dealer today and ask for the environmentally preferred paint that doesn’t sacrifice quality – ask for *Pure Performance* by PPG. Available at... 10- second tag (customizable by dealer).

Exhibit D (emphasis and ellipses in original).

E. *Pure Performance* Paint Can Label:

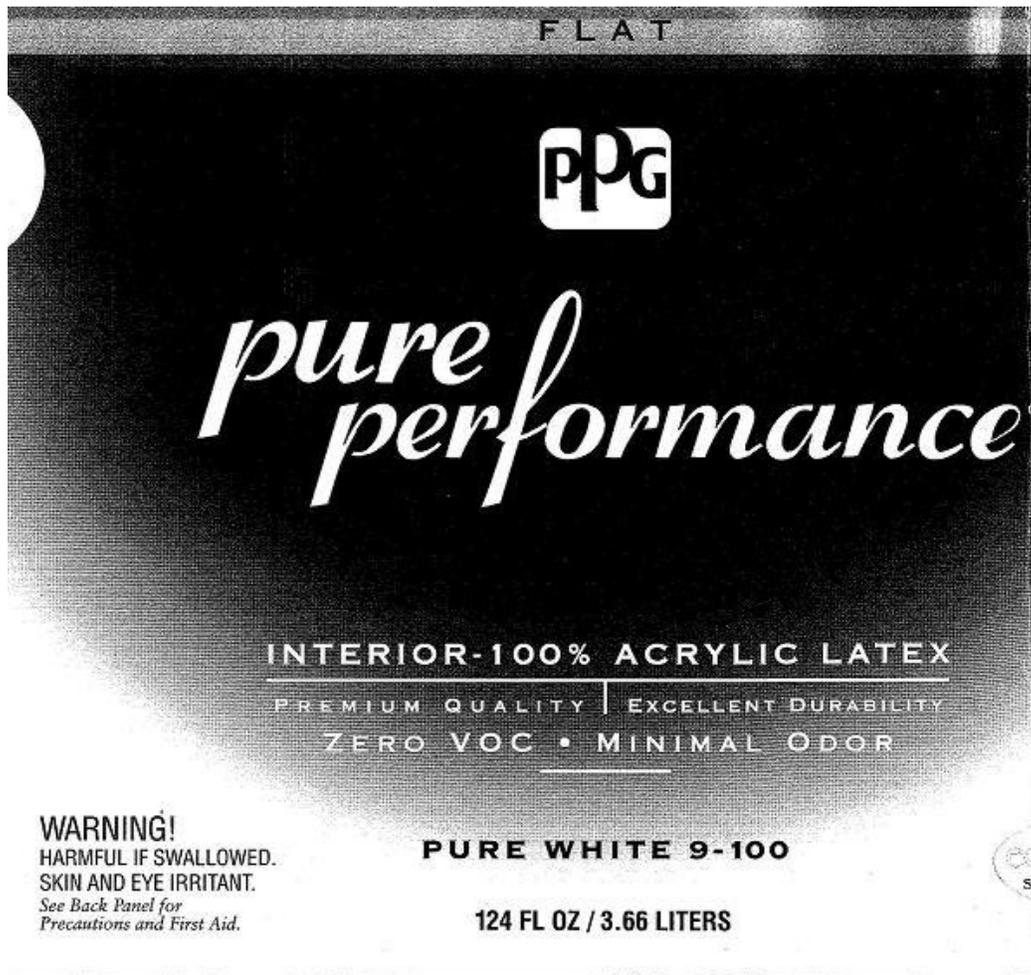


Exhibit E.

8. Consumers likely interpret a representation that a paint contains “Zero VOCs” to mean that the quantitative measure of the VOC level is zero grams per liter, or that the VOC level is “trace” (or effectively zero) where: (a) VOCs have not been intentionally added to the paint; (b) the presence of VOCs at that level does not cause material harm that consumers typically associate with VOCs; and (c) the presence of VOCs at that level does not result in concentrations higher than would be found at background levels in the ambient air.

9. In numerous instances, *Pure Performance* paints contain more than a trace level of VOCs after tinting.

**COUNT I (False or Misleading Representation)**

10. Through the means described in Paragraphs 6 and 7, respondent has represented, expressly or by implication, that all *Pure Performance* paints, including paints with color added, contain zero VOCs.

11. In truth and in fact, in numerous instances, *Pure Performance* paints do not contain zero VOCs after color is added. Therefore, the representation set forth in Paragraph 10 is false or misleading.

**COUNT II (Unsubstantiated Representation)**

12. Through the means described in Paragraphs 6 and 7, in numerous instances, respondent has represented, expressly or by implication, that it possessed and relied upon a reasonable basis that substantiated the representation set forth in Paragraph 10, at the time the representation was made.

13. In truth and in fact, respondent did not possess and rely upon a reasonable basis that substantiated the representation set forth in Paragraph 10, at the time the representation was made. Therefore, the representation set forth in Paragraph 12 is false or misleading.

**COUNT III (Means and Instrumentalities)**

14. Respondent has distributed the promotional materials described in Paragraphs 6 and 7 to independent distributors and retailers. In so doing, respondent has provided them with the means and instrumentalities for the commission of deceptive acts or practices.

15. Respondent's practices, as alleged in this complaint, constitute deceptive acts or practices in or affecting commerce in violation of Section 5(a) of the Federal Trade Commission Act.

**THEREFORE**, the Federal Trade Commission, this fifth day of March 2013, has issued this complaint against respondent.

By the Commission, Commissioners Leibowitz and Wright not participating.

**SEAL:**

Richard C. Donohue  
Acting Secretary