



ACOUSTICAL

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E.A. Acoustical Engineering, Inc.
Acoustical and Noise Control Consulting

USDA - FDA APPROVALS FOR ACOUSTICAL MATERIALS

The Question comes up from time to time about FDA and USDA approvals. First of all there are no approvals since the federal government is not in the business of endorsing commercial products.

The USDA used to have a materials evaluation division whose mandate was to evaluate building materials used in federally inspected meat and poultry facilities. The correct terminology for USDA was "Accepted" The FDA never had a materials evaluation division.

Based on my visits and meetings with USDA several years ago in Washington the test of whether an acoustical material was acceptable was to place the material in a bucket of water and if the cover did not leak or the material disintegrate and was cleanable it was acceptable. Mineral ceiling tile would disintegrate in water and therefore was not acceptable.

Encapsulated glass fiber materials of various sorts were found to be acceptable. The USDA materials evaluation dept was closed a number of years ago in favor of self certification. If material did not meet the required acceptance test it would be required to be removed, often at some considerable expense to the manufacturer, thus self certification is a cautious but positive approach for acoustical material usage.

In my judgment Sound Silencer™ Porous Expanded Polypropylene (PEPP) as available from Acoustical Surfaces Inc. would qualify for acceptance in USDA or FDA regulated facilities. Encapsulated Fiberglass ceiling panels are quite expensive and can be limited in their ability to be field cut, PEPP on the other hand can be easily cut to accommodate the myriad of penetrations in a food related facility. The panels can be easily washed or steam cleaned as required.

Food prep facilities are generally regulated by state and local health departments.

Mike Nixon
President

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