

If label warnings on paint stripper or adhesives give you pause, choose less toxic alternatives for household fix-ups. However, “greener” doesn’t always mean benign, so check the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) before you buy. (If you can’t find it online, call the manufacturer.) The MSDS gives specifics on ingredients and hazardous chemicals, and it spells out what protective gear you need, how to store the product and how to dispose of leftovers.

Caulk	Deck sealer	Glue	Wood sealer	Lubricant	Paint stripper
<p>PROBLEMS Solvents, toxic chemicals, high levels of VOCs*</p>	<p>PROBLEMS Hazardous chemicals, suspected carcinogens, high levels of VOCs</p>	<p>PROBLEMS May contain toxic chemicals or release fumes</p>	<p>PROBLEMS Hazardous chemicals, known or suspected carcinogens, high VOC levels</p>	<p>PROBLEMS High levels of VOCs. Contains flammable petroleum distillates and may cause headache, dizziness, nausea and upper respiratory irritation.</p>	<p>PROBLEMS High levels of VOCs and hazardous chemicals</p>
<p>GREEN ALTERNATIVE Geocel Quick Shield VOC-Free Sealant</p>	<p>GREEN ALTERNATIVE Safecoat WaterShield</p>	<p>GREEN ALTERNATIVE Elmer’s Glue-All and Carpenters Wood Glue Speed Grip</p>	<p>GREEN ALTERNATIVE Safecoat Hard Seal</p>	<p>GREEN ALTERNATIVE Jojoba oil</p>	<p>GREEN ALTERNATIVE SOY•Gel</p>
<p>ADVANTAGES Silicone-free, mildew-resistant caulk can be used inside or outside. Made from limestone and latex-based polymer. Appropriate for tubs and sinks.</p>	<p>ADVANTAGES Waterproofs exterior wood. Water based; no carcinogens; no ingredient used in high enough concentrations to qualify as hazardous; low VOCs.</p>	<p>ADVANTAGES Elmer’s: No known hazardous chemicals or carcinogens. Inexpensive; easy to find and use. Speed Grip: Water-based construction adhesive has zero VOCs. Suitable for plastic, wood, concrete, metal, carpet and drywall. Cleans up with water.</p>	<p>ADVANTAGES Water-based, low-VOC product for use as a finish coat or to control outgassing of previously painted surfaces. No known carcinogens or chemicals in high enough concentration to be designated hazardous.</p>	<p>ADVANTAGES Derived from a woody evergreen shrub, jojoba is a natural wax that lubricates surfaces.</p>	<p>ADVANTAGES The soy-based product can be used to remove multiple layers of urethane or paint from wood, brick and concrete.</p>
<p>CAUTIONS Contains small quantity (less than 1 percent) of mildewcide, so protective gloves and eye gear are recommended. Releases low levels of VOCs as it cures, but much less than traditional caulks. Not recommended as a tile adhesive for showers.</p>	<p>CAUTIONS Avoid exposing unused product to extreme heat or cold. Use protective eyewear; don’t inhale fumes. Porous wood may need two coats.</p>	<p>CAUTIONS Elmer’s: Use in well-ventilated area. Don’t use near heat, flames, strong acids or alkaline materials. Avoid vapors and direct, prolonged skin contact. Speed Grip: Could cause mild skin irritation or headache if not used in well-ventilated area.</p>	<p>CAUTIONS None. Nontoxic jojoba is safe for contact with skin.</p>	<p>CAUTIONS Wear protective gloves and eye goggles.</p>	<p>CAUTIONS Wear protective gloves and eye goggles.</p>
<p>BUY IT Hardware store; GeocelUSA.com</p>	<p>BUY IT AFMSafecoat.com</p>	<p>BUY IT Elmer’s: Sold almost anywhere; Elmers.com Speed Grip: Hardware store; GeocelUSA.com</p>	<p>BUY IT AFMSafecoat.com</p>	<p>BUY IT Natural food stores</p>	<p>BUY IT Franmar.com</p>

*VOC = Volatile Organic Compound