



Sustainability & CSR Statement

Agua only sources its base fabrics from developed economies that have a substantial degree of regulatory oversight. Finishing and final processing is carried out in UK mills ensuring compliance with the highest environmental, employment law and quality standards, as well as providing additional employment in the North of England. Our soft fabric processing machinery was replaced in 2018 and is state of the art, minimizing and managing waste, using fewer processes, while reducing power consumption through greater operational efficiency and reuse of steam.

All manufacturing and finishing complies with strict EU regulations with regard to the handling of potentially hazardous substances for both operatives and the environment. Some use of manmade additives is vital to give fabric the technical properties required by statutory regulations and for markets where safety and performance is paramount, such as healthcare, medical and marine environments.

In conjunction with our suppliers and independent technical institutions, we are constantly trying to source alternative and more environmentally friendly additives and treatments, or find ways to remove their use completely; we strive to strike a balance between the cost and performance demanded by customers while at the same time trying to safeguard the environment.

We are currently researching and developing new eco-friendly flame-retardant additives to comply with current regulations for safety critical markets. Wherever possible we seek to source and utilise Halogen free additives. Our new policy is to increase the proportion of plant-based products in our artificial leathers to reduce the use of PVC; this also helps with biodegradability at the end of the product life. An example of this new policy is our recently overhauled Furnisoft PU faux leather range which is now biodegradable.

All our finished products are phthalate free and are REACH compliant: *Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals* (EU regulation: 18th December 2006). Our processes are non-toxic and the methods used during manufacture and finishing ensure that potentially hazardous accidental cross contamination is minimised to the greatest degree possible (not the case for additives obtained outside of, and not checked within, the EU). All our fabrics

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meet Oeko-Tex standards, regardless of origin, so are free from harmful chemicals and safe for human use.

Agua has an unequivocal anti-slavery, anti-child labour policy working only with suppliers in developed economies sharing similar values and who are known not to engage in the use of child or slave labour, nor have any prior history of doing so. Given the long term, open and transparent supplier relationships in place, unannounced inspections are welcomed.

Where possible we work with mills either in the UK or geographically as close to the UK as possible to avoid environmental impact from transportation and keep our carbon footprint as low as possible.

Our products are extremely durable and long lasting. This significantly reduces the need to frequently replace fabrics, with its attendant impact on the environment: for example, our products avoid some of the shortcomings of natural fibres such as moth deterioration or lower resistance to abrasion. In addition, cotton, leather and wool products requiring large scale farming, use of pesticides, harmful fertilisers and heavy water consumption, are actively avoided. Treatment processes such as Agua's, which take place in contained environments, often have a lower impact than those for natural fibres.

All Agua products are therefore vegetarian and vegan friendly without contributing to the climate changing effects of farming animals to supply our manufacturing processes – or the significant land, water and food use animal production requires.

In short, we are highly conscious of our potential impact environmentally and socially, and in common with all reputable and responsible suppliers, work continuously to improve our processes within the constraints of the regulatory framework required for commercial upholstery fabrics.

Agua is an ISO 9001 accredited Company and longstanding member of the British Contract Furnishing Association – the trade association for the commercial interiors industry in the UK. We always comply with its rigorous Code of Conduct.

Agua Fabrics, 2019.



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