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The Australian Ecolabel Program

Australian Voluntary Environmental Labelling Standard

ADHESIVES



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Use of This Standard

This voluntary environmental labelling standard may be used by competent environmental assessors to establish product compliance to the Australian Ecolabel Program. Products that are certified with the mark of conformity, the "Environmental Choice Label" have been independently tested and demonstrate compliance to the environmental and social performance criteria detailed in this standard. The overall goal of environmental labels and declarations is, through communication of verifiable and accurate information that is not misleading, on environmental aspects of products and services, to encourage the demand for and supply of those products and services that cause less stress on the environment, thereby stimulating the potential for market-driven continuous environmental improvement.

This standard identifies environmental, quality, regulatory and social performance criteria that products sold on the Australian market can meet in order to be considered as best "environment practice". Products that have been certified as complying to this standard may gain greater market recognition and a marketing advantage in government and business procurement programs and broad consumer environmental preference.

This standard can be used by Australian producers to guide their design for environment programs by using the environmental criteria as key performance benchmarks that reduce the environmental loads of their product. The standard is necessarily restricted in its identification of environmental loads from the product life cycle. Producers should consider other environmental improvement along the product cycle not included in this standard for their design for environment programs and aim for even higher levels of environmental performance where technically possible.

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Voluntary Environmental Labelling Standard

Adhesives

Abstract

This Standard specifies environmental performance requirements of a broad range of adhesives for the Australian Ecolabel Program. The program generally complies with ISO 14024: "Environmental labels and declarations - Guiding principles" which requires environmental labelling specifications to include criteria that are objective, reasonable and verifiable.

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Definitions:

"Label" means the Environmental Choice Australia Label.

1.0 Introduction to the Environmental Problems of Adhesives

Adhesives are well known for their fumes and odours that may affect installers or building occupants and that are responsible for toxic air emissions to the environment. Adhesives contain a large range of chemicals that ensure superior binding strength for a large range of applications. The chemical components of adhesives are binders, solvents/thinners, plasticizers, fillers, thickeners, anti-foaming agents, preservatives and a large range of other chemical additives whose respective functions add to the products intended purpose. Progress in the adhesives industry has allowed the development of adhesives with reduced levels of the toxic compounds which still maintain their bonding strength for their intended purpose. This standard defines a range of environmental performance criteria for adhesives. These criteria include a restriction on carcinogenic materials and other highly toxic materials in adhesives and stipulate limits for less harmful chemicals that contribute to environmental pollution and damage human health. This standard also defines the maximum level of volatile organic compounds contained in certified adhesive product reducing overall indoor and outdoor atmospheric pollution.

2.0 Product Category Scope

This standard is applicable to the following categories of adhesives.

2.1 Wallpaper Paste

2.2 Adhesives for wall covering

2.3 Adhesives for flooring

2.4 Adhesives for tiles

2.5 Other adhesives (paper, wood, office, plastic).

3.0 Environmental Performance Criteria

3.1 Fitness for Purpose

Certified products should be good performers in their intended application. It is implied that certain standards of product performance are implicit in the label. Certified product must ensure that:

- 3.1.1 The product meets the performance requirements of the relevant Australian Standard for its intended application; or
- 3.1.2 The product meets any other internationally accepted standard if it is to be exported;
- 3.1.3 Certified products will ensure that during the subsequent 12 months of certification that appropriate and acceptable information describing gluing instructions, recommendation of amount of adhesive per unit area, instructions for cleaning equipment and waste disposal methods for the container and for any remaining adhesive, and methods of cleaning application equipment shall be provided with the product, or on packaging or labels. Adhesive products shall enclose a list of contents where all chemical components over 1% are stated.

3.2 Prohibited Compounds

The following compounds should not be formulated or added during the manufacturing process to adhesive products because of their especially severe effects on the human body and the environment.

Phthalates

Alkylphenoethoxylates

Halogenated solvent

Bioaccumulative preservative

3.3 Levels of Volatile Organic Compounds

Volatile Organic Compounds (VOC's), the term used to describe solvents and other chemicals in the adhesive which evaporate during use, are main contributors to adverse air toxicity pollution. The amount of solvent varies across the different types of adhesive. Adhesive products shall contain no more than 5% in weight of Volatile Organic Compounds.

3.4: Packaging

The adhesive package shall be re-sealable after first use. Halogenated plastics shall not be used in packaging.

3.5 Human Health Exposure:

The adhesive in the state of use shall not expose consumers to Carcinogenic substances in categories 1, 2A and 2B as classed by the International Agency for Research on Cancer – <http://www.iarc.fr> at levels greater than 1/20th of limits set by the Australian National Occupational Health and Safety Commission.

3.6 Compliance to Environmental Regulations

The applicant is required to comply with relevant environmental legislation and government orders at the Local, State and Commonwealth level, if these have been issued. An applicant's compliance with this criterion may be established by undertaking a series of random checks and gathering samples of applicant operational procedures and documents by approved assessors as evidence to support compliance during the verification and /or a statement of self declaration by an executive officer of the applicant organisation. Where an applicant is from an overseas jurisdiction, that jurisdictions environmental regulations apply.

3.7 Compliance to Labour, Anti-Discrimination and Safety Regulations

An applicant shall demonstrate that all employees are covered by a Federal or State award or a certified industrial agreement or a registered workplace agreement as determined by the Industrial Relations Commission, the Employment Advocate or a State or Territory Workplace Relations Agency.

An applicant shall demonstrate general compliance to the terms of State or Territory Legislation concerning Occupational, Health and Safety and/or the *Commonwealth Safety, Rehabilitation and Compensation Act 1988* where applicable. Where the applicant is subject to a breach order by a government agency or a guilty verdict by an Australian Court within the last 24 months on the basis of a breach of State, Territory or Commonwealth Occupational, Health and Safety Legislation there must be evidence of corrective action.

The applicant shall demonstrate general compliance to the requirements of the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*, *Sex Discrimination Act 1984*, *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*, and *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999* and complementary State Legislation. Applicants cannot be in the list of 'named' or non-compliant employers under the *Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act 1999*. Where the applicant is subject to a breach order by a government agency or a guilty verdict by an Australian Court in the last 24 months on the basis of a breach of these Acts there must be evidence of corrective action.

Where an applicant is from an overseas jurisdiction, the applicant shall demonstrate general compliance to that jurisdictions anti-discrimination, occupational health and safety and workers compensations regulations. Where the applicant is subject to a breach order by a government agency or a guilty verdict by a legal court in their respective country within the last 24 months on the basis of a the breach of anti-discrimination, occupational health and safety and workers compensations regulations there must be evidence of corrective action.

An applicant's compliance with these criteria may be established by undertaking a series of random checks and gathering samples of applicant operational procedures and documents by approved assessors as evidence to support compliance during the verification and /or a statement of self declaration by an executive officer of the applicant organisation.

4.0 Compliance Testing

Conformance with this standard shall be demonstrated by undertaking an assessment to the above criteria by an approved assessor following the certification and verification procedures detailed in the Australian Environmental Labelling Association Documented Quality Management System which generally follows the environmental auditing requirements of ISO 14 010 and 14 011.

The Australian Ecolabel Program classifies approved assessors as:

1. Assessors registered by the Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd as environmental professionals that hold expertise relevant for an assessment and which have undertaken training in the procedures of the Australian Ecolabel Program, or
2. Environmental auditors accredited with the Quality Society of Australasia following the principles of ISO 140012; or
3. Assessors registered with the Environmental Choice New Zealand Trust.

New testing shall be undertaken by a laboratory accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) or similar overseas accreditation to carry out the relevant tests and/or documentation detailing environmental performance against the key indicators for this standard. The tests results should be presented on NATA endorsed reports or from a laboratory acceptable to the Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd .

Audit evidence should be of such a quality and quantity that competent environmental auditors working independently of each other will reach similar audit findings from evaluation of the same audit evidence against the same audit criteria.

Suitable sources of information to establish compliance may be but are not limited to:

- 1) Technical specification of the product.
- 2) Obvious characteristics of the product from examination.
- 3) Scientific and test results and reports.
- 4) Environmental management system and audit reports and results.
- 5) Life cycle assessment of each stage of the product life cycle via a physical audit and examination.
- 6) Life cycle assessment via scientific testing.
- 7) A statement of confirmation by an executive officer.
- 8) An assessment of company or government records.
- 9) Other material that can be considered objective evidence.

If testing results or environmental auditing results are not available, and/or there is not sufficient data to establish full compliance to the criteria required by this standard then certification cannot be awarded.
