

## The Australian Ecolabel Program

### Good Environmental Choice Australia 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 “Good 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 the communication of verifiable and accurate information, which is not misleading, on environmental aspects of products and services. This encourages 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 good “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, as well as broad consumer preference.

This standard can be used by Australian producers to guide their designs for environment programs by using the environmental criteria as key performance benchmarks to 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 measures along the product cycle, which are not included in this standard, in their environment program designs for and aim for even higher levels of environmental performance where technically possible.

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## GOOD ENVIRONMENTAL CHOICE AUSTRALIA STANDARD

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### Abstract

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

### Definitions

**Label** means the Environmental Choice Australia Label.

**VOC** means any organic compound having a vapour pressure of 0.01 kPa or more, at 20 °C, or having a corresponding volatility under the particular conditions of use.

## **1 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Purpose**

This Standard seeks to define good environmental performance benchmarks for adhesives. The voluntary environmental labelling standard implemented by Good Environmental Choice Australia (GECA) as part of the Australian ecolabel program specifies environmental performance criteria for a range of adhesives including wallpaper pastes, wall and floor adhesives, home and office adhesives, and wood, plastic and metal glues. This standard stipulates the environmental load of such products throughout the major aspects of their life cycle.

### **1.2 Background**

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 STANDARD CATEGORY SCOPE**

This standard is applicable to the following categories of adhesive products:

- Wallpaper Pastes
- Adhesives for wall coverings
- Adhesives for floorings
- Adhesives for tiles
- Other adhesives (paper, wood, office, plastic).

### **3 ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE CRITERIA**

#### **3.1 Fitness for Purpose**

Certified products should be good performers in their intended application. Certain standards of quality and durability are implicit in the Label. The manufacturer must ensure that the product is fit for its intended purpose and:

##### **3.1.1 Applicable Standards**

The product meets or exceeds the requirements of the relevant Australian Standard, or the product meets the applicable and accepted standard in its target market if it is to be exported.

Or,

##### **3.1.2 Demonstrated Performance**

If there is no relevant Australian Standard, the product can demonstrate sufficient quality by providing testing reports from an independent organisation or case studies from installations demonstrating market suitability and quality, and

#### **3.2 Hazardous Material Requirements**

##### **3.2.1 Prohibited Substances**

The following substances must not be present in the adhesive or used in production.

- Phthalates
- Alkylphenolethoxylates
- Halogenated solvents
- Bioaccumulative preservatives

The following phthalates may be used in the production of industrial adhesives for wood and plastic binding applications:

- Diisodecyl phthalate (DIDP)
- Diisononyl phthalate (DINP)

##### **3.2.2 Levels of Volatile Organic Compounds**

Adhesive products must contain no more than 5% by weight of Volatile Organic Compounds.

##### **3.2.3 Human Health Exposure**

The adhesive shall not be capable of exposing users 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 the limits set by the Australian National Occupational Health and Safety Commission.

### **3.3 Post Consumption Recycling and Labelling**

#### **3.3.1 Packaging Requirements**

The adhesive package must be re-sealable after first use.

Chlorinated or halogenated plastics must not be used in product packaging.

#### **3.3.2 Product Information**

Certified products must ensure 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.

#### **4 COMPLIANCE TO ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS**

The applicant is required to comply with relevant environmental legislation and government orders at the Local, State, and Commonwealth levels, if these have been issued. An applicant's compliance with these criteria may be established by undertaking a series of random checks; and/or by gathering samples of applicant operational procedures and documents from approved assessors as evidence to support compliance during the verification. Where an applicant is from an overseas jurisdiction, that jurisdiction's environmental regulations apply. Where the applicant is subject to a guilty verdict by a legally constituted court in the last 24 months on the basis of a breach of any environmental legislation or permits, there must be evidence of corrective action.

#### **5 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 or a workplace agreement in compliance with Workplace Relations Act 1996 Part 7 – The Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standard.

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, 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 jurisdiction's 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' compensation 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; gathering samples of applicant operational procedures and documents from approved assessors; and/or by providing a self-declaration document signed by an executive officer of the applicant organisation as evidence to support compliance during verification.

## **6 COMPLIANCE TESTING**

### **6.1 Audit Methodology**

Conformance with this standard shall be demonstrated by undertaking an assessment under the above criteria by an approved assessor, following the certification and verification procedures detailed in the Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd Documented Quality Management System, which generally follows the environmental auditing requirements of ISO 14 011 and 14 012.

### **6.2 Assessor Competency**

The Australian Ecolabel Program classifies approved assessors as:

- a. Assessors registered by Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd as environmental professionals that hold expertise relevant for an assessment, and who have undertaken training in the procedures of the Australian Ecolabel Program; or
- b. Environmental auditors accredited with the RABQSA.

### **6.3 Suitable Sources**

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:

- a. Technical specification of the product.
- b. Obvious characteristics of the product under examination.
- c. Scientific test results and reports.
- d. Environmental management system and audit reports and results.
- e. Life-cycle assessment of each stage of the product life-cycle via a physical audit and examination.
- f. Life-cycle assessment via scientific testing.
- g. A statement of confirmation by an executive officer.
- h. An assessment of company or government records.
- i. Other material that can be considered objective evidence.

### **6.4 Laboratory Testing**

New testing shall be undertaken by a laboratory accredited by the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA), or similar overseas accreditation agents who can conduct the relevant tests and/or provide documentation detailing environmental performance against the criteria of this standard. The test results should be presented on NATA-endorsed reports or from a laboratory acceptable to Good Environmental Choice Australia Ltd.

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