



THE ORIGINAL GREEN
SEAL OF APPROVAL
SINCE 1989

GS-53 Green Seal™ Standard for Specialty Cleaning Products for Industrial & Institutional Use

Why the Standard Was Developed

While Green Seal standards exist for most kinds of cleaning products used in the institutional market, we saw a need for a life cycle-based standard for specialty cleaning products. These products range from disinfectants and sanitizers to graffiti removers and oven cleaners, which can have severe side-effects on the environment and human health. This standard was developed to reduce the impact of these products and to provide definitions for common claims made on these products.

GS-53 Product Categories

- Adhesive removers
- Antimicrobial pesticide products (e.g., disinfectant and sanitizer products)
- Boat cleaners (e.g., hull or bilge)
- Boat waxes, polishes, sealants and glazes
- Chewing gum removers
- Deck, siding and outdoor furniture cleaners
- Dish cleaners (e.g., hand dish, automatic dish, rinse agent products)
- Dusting aids
- Electronic cleaners
- Fruit and vegetable washes
- Furniture polishes
- Graffiti removers
- Grout cleaners
- Leather cleaners
- Metal cleaners
- Mold and mildew stain removers
- Motor vehicle cleaners
- Motor vehicle dressings
- Motor vehicle windshield washing fluids
- Motor vehicle waxes, polishes, sealants and glazes
- Odor removers
- Optical lens cleaners
- Oven cleaners
- Pressurized gas dusters
- Printing press cleaners
- Products containing microorganisms (e.g., general-purpose, restroom, glass, carpet)
- Products containing enzymes (e.g., general-purpose, restroom, glass, carpet)
- Rust stain removers
- Stone cleaners
- Tire and wheel cleaners
- Upholstery cleaners
- Waterless motor vehicle cleaners

SUSTAINABILITY
LEADERSHIP STANDARDS



INDEPENDENT
THIRD-PARTY
CERTIFICATION



SUSTAINABILITY
RESEARCH &
LIFE CYCLE ANALYSIS



TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
FOR INSTITUTIONAL
GREENING

Key Areas of Standard

The criteria in GS-53 are intended to protect the health of building occupants and those using the product, as well as lower the product's impact on the environment.

The criteria cover:

- Functional Performance
- Health and Environmental Requirements
- Manufacturing
- Packaging
- Training and Labeling

Functional Performance Requirements

Certified products must demonstrate effective functional performance with an objective, standardized test method applicable for the product category, or demonstrate comparable or superior cleaning performance to a national market-leading product in its category. Each product shall clean common soils and surfaces in its category effectively, at the most dilute/least concentrated manufacturer-recommended dilution level for routine cleaning.



Health and Environmental Requirements

Carcinogens and other hazardous chemicals have traditionally been used in specialty cleaning products. GS-53 prohibits the use of harmful chemicals, such as formaldehyde donors, 2-butoxyethanol, phthalates, and heavy metals. Asthmagens, carcinogens, mutagens, neurotoxins and reproductive toxins are also prohibited. The standard includes criteria for products containing biological components (microbes and enzymes) by addressing concerns about biosafety, purity, and genetically modified microorganisms. Products must have low VOC content, be readily biodegradable, and be non-toxic to aquatic life. Minimum levels of concentration are required for most product types to help reduce the environmental burden of manufacturing and packaging and minimize transporting unnecessary packaging and water.

Manufacturing Sustainability Requirements

The standard outlines good manufacturing practices and social responsibility requirements. To drive responsible use of resources in manufacturing and distribution, reporting of energy and water use, emissions, and waste from manufacturing is required along with distribution records.

Packaging Sustainability Requirements

Packaging can be a significant source of environmental impact for specialty cleaning products. GS-53 requires responsible use of packaging material. This can be achieved with plastic packaging that is recyclable, lightweighted, includes 25% post-consumer material, refillable with effective take-back programs, or other innovative plastic packaging approaches – or with non-plastic options that contain 25% post-consumer material and are recyclable. Packaging cannot contain common toxins such as heavy metals, phthalates, bisphenol A, or chlorinated material like PVC. There are limits on the use of ready-to-use packaging forms, aerosol packaging, and disposable wipes.

Training and Labeling Requirements

Training on the proper use of the product is required, including applicable step-by-step instructions for dilution and use; consequences of improper dilution and use; proper disposal of the product, and the use of personal protective equipment and other equipment.

Labeling:

- Product use and disposal: The product label shall include English and another language or English and graphical representation describing proper dilution, dose, use, personal protective equipment requirements, and disposal.
- Ingredients: Product label must list ingredients.
- Environmental claims: “Natural”, “organic”, or “bio-based” claims must meet definitions as outlined in the standard so the end-user can be assured that a certified product has been verified to meet such claims.
- Product-specific labeling: Several products, including disinfectants and sanitizers, direct release products, boat cleaning products, dish detergents, and biologically-based products, require unique labeling for their use.

Green Seal is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to safeguarding the environment and transforming the marketplace by promoting the manufacture, purchase, and use of environmentally responsible products and services. Founded in 1989, Green Seal provides science-based environmental certification standards that are credible, transparent, and essential in an increasingly educated and competitive marketplace.

This is only a summary of GS-53. The full standard is available for free viewing and downloading at www.greenseal.org/GS53.aspx. For more information visit: www.greenseal.org, call: 202-872-6400 or e-mail: greenseal@greenseal.org.