



THE ORIGINAL GREEN
SEAL OF APPROVAL
SINCE 1989

Certifying a Restaurant

“Green” has become a marketing term for many industries, including foodservice. As the demand for more sustainable options grows, operations are looking for ways to satisfy that demand that don’t expose them to the risks of greenwashing*. Third-party certification is the best way to assure your customers that you are making real and effective reductions in environmental impact, as verified by an independent party.

What to look for in certification:

A Strong Standard as a Basis

Standards should be based on science and knowledge of the industry. A life-cycle study of restaurant and foodservice operations provides the basis for GS-46. This standard, like all Green Seal™ environmental standards, was developed in an open forum that drew upon the knowledge of industry experts and included input from over 100 stakeholders to result in a standard that is both achievable and effective. Green Seal is an ANSI-accredited standards developer. ANSI (the American National Standards Institute) provides an independent review of the processes used for the development of standards and ensures requirements like stakeholder involvement and consensus approval are met. The GS-46 standard has been approved by ANSI and is the only environmental American National Standard for restaurants and food services.

A Transparent Process

Every restaurant should be measured by the same criteria, in a fair and transparent manner. Green Seal operates under strict guidelines in order to avoid any conflict of interest. Fixed fees (published on www.greenseal.org) pay for the certification evaluation and the development of standards. Green Seal does not offer consulting services, promote products or services that are not Green Seal-certified, or accept advertising in publications or its website. GS-46 includes minimum performance requirements in high priority areas so the patron knows that all Green Seal-certified restaurants are making a real and measureable difference.

An On-Site Audit

Green Seal believes that patrons assume on-site audits are part of any credible certification process and conducts on-site audits of product manufacturing plants, lodging facilities and foodservice operations as part of the evaluation for certification. Major certifications such as USDA Organic, USGBC LEED and FSC also follow this established procedure. In addition to reviewing documentation, an on-site audit ensures that compliance has been achieved.

* Greenwashing: The dissemination of misleading information by an organization to conceal its abuse of the environment in order to present a positive public image.

ENVIRONMENTAL
LEADERSHIP STANDARDS



CERTIFICATION FOR
PRODUCTS, SERVICES,
PROPERTIES & COMPANIES



PARTNERSHIPS IN
GREEN PURCHASING &
FACILITIES MANAGEMENT



SUSTAINABILITY
RESEARCH & LIFE CYCLE
ANALYSIS



4 Steps to Green Seal Certification:

- 1) Application:** Restaurants interested in going green can read and download GS-46 here: http://www.greenseal.org/certification/standards/gs46_restaurantfoodsvcs.cfm. The standard and overview documents can be used as guidelines to move toward a more sustainable operation, and to see if the operation could achieve the certification criteria. Start the application process by submitting an on-line preliminary application at: <http://www.greenseal.org/getcertified/index.cfm>. After submitting the preliminary application you will receive the formal application package which includes our confidentiality agreement, application for certification and a confirmed evaluation fee. After the evaluation fee has been received by Green Seal your restaurant will be assigned a project manager who will guide you through the rest of the certification process.
- 2) Data Review:** Your project manager will explain the evaluation process, send you a checklist outlining the data required for certification and answer any questions you may have. Checklists and guides for GS-46 can be downloaded at: http://www.greenseal.org/certification/standards/gs46_restaurantfoodsvcs.cfm. Electronic submissions (PDF, Word or scanned documents) are encouraged as you collect and submit the necessary data to your project manager.
- 3) On-Site Audit:** An on-site audit of the operation will be scheduled after most of the required data has been submitted and reviewed. The auditor performing the on-site visit will focus on verifying that policies have been effectively communicated to staff, that the policies and procedures outlined are being implemented, and that environmentally preferable products are purchased and in use. After the audit, the auditor will provide you with a report documenting any corrective actions that must be taken in order to achieve certification. Any corrective actions must be addressed within 120 days of the receipt of the post-audit report.
- 4) Award of Certification:** Once the operation meets all requirements for certification, Green Seal will grant the license to use the Green Seal Certification Mark in promotion and advertising by awarding an official certification letter and certificate. Certified restaurants and foodservice operations are also listed on Green Seal's website.

Typically a few months prior to the anniversary date of certification, Green Seal will be in contact to schedule a monitoring evaluation. The ongoing compliance monitoring verifies that procedures put in place for certification continue to be followed. To maintain certification bronze level-certified restaurants must meet the silver requirements within three years of initial certification.

For more information on Green Seal, GS-46 and the certification process, visit: www.greenseal.org or call 202-872-6400.