



GS-7  
Green Seal™ Environmental Standard for  
Printing and Writing Paper

**Sixth Edition**

**November 12, 1999**

Copyright © 1999 Green Seal, Inc. All Rights Reserved

THE MARK OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Green Seal, Inc. • 1001 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 827 • Washington, DC 20036-5525 • (202)  
872-6400 • Fax (202) 872-4324 [www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)

Green Seal's Environmental Standards are copyrighted to protect Green Seal's publication rights, not to restrict their use in product design or evaluation.

## GREEN SEAL™

Green Seal is a non-profit organization devoted to environmental standard setting, product certification, and public education. Green Seal's mission is to work towards environmental sustainability by identifying and promoting environmentally responsible products, purchasing, and production. Through its standard setting, certification and education programs, Green Seal:

- identifies products that are designed and manufactured in an environmentally responsible manner;
- offers scientific analyses to help consumers make educated purchasing decisions regarding environmental impacts;
- ensures consumers that any product bearing the Green Seal Certification Mark has earned the right to use it; and
- encourages manufacturers to develop new products that are significantly less damaging to the environment than their predecessors.

The intent of Green Seal's environmental requirements is to reduce, to the extent technologically and economically feasible, the environmental impacts associated with the manufacture, use and disposal of products. Set on a category-by-category basis, Environmental Standards focus on significant opportunities to reduce a product's environmental impact.

Green Seal offers certification to all products covered by its Standards. Manufacturers may submit their products for evaluation by Green Seal. Those which comply with Green Seal's requirements may be authorized to use the Green Seal Certification Mark on products and in product advertising. Manufacturers authorized to use the Green Seal Certification Mark on their product are subject to an ongoing program of testing, inspection, and enforcement.

For additional information on Green Seal or any of its programs, contact:

Green Seal  
1001 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 827  
Washington, DC 20036-5525  
(202) 872-6400  
[www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)

## FOREWORD

**A. Certification.** This Environmental Standard contains the basic requirements for certain products (as defined in the Scope section below) to be certified by Green Seal™ and for their manufacturers to receive authorization to use the Green Seal Certification Mark on products and their packaging, and in product advertising. The requirements are based on an assessment of the environmental impacts of product manufacture, use, and disposal and reflect information and advice obtained from industry, trade associations, users, government officials, environmental and other public interest organizations, and others with relevant expertise. These requirements are subject to revision as further experience and investigation may show is necessary or desirable.

**B. Compliance with the Standard.** Compliance with this Standard is one of the conditions of certification of a product by Green Seal.

**C. Compliance with Government Rules.** In order to be authorized to use the Green Seal Certification Mark, the manufacturer of the certified product must disclose all governmental allegations or determinations of violation of federal, state, or local environmental laws or regulations with respect to facilities in which the product is manufactured. Certification will be denied any product manufactured in violation of environmental laws or regulations if, in Green Seal's judgment, such violations indicate that the environmental impacts of the product significantly exceed those contemplated in the setting of the standard.

**D. Limitations on Purpose of Standard.** Green Seal's Standards provide basic criteria to promote environmental quality. Provisions for product safety have not been included in this Standard because government agencies and other national standard-setting organizations establish and enforce safety requirements.

**E. Substantially Equivalent Products.** Products that are substantially similar to those covered by this standard in terms of function and environmental impact may be evaluated and certified by Green Seal against the intent of the requirements of this standard.

**F. Unanticipated Environmental Impacts.** A product which complies with this Standard will not necessarily be certified by Green Seal if, when examined and tested, it is found to have other features which significantly increase its impact on the environment. In such a situation, Green Seal will ordinarily amend its standards to account for the unanticipated environmental impacts.

**G. Certification Agreement and Green Seal Rules.** In order to be authorized to apply the Green Seal Certification Mark to a product or its packaging, or to use the Green Seal Certification Mark in product advertising, the manufacturer of the product must (1) undergo an initial product evaluation to determine that the product complies with Green Seal's requirements, (2) sign a Green Seal Certification Agreement that, among other things, defines how and where the Green Seal may be used, (3) pay fees to cover the costs of testing and monitoring, (4) agree to an ongoing program of factory inspections and product testing, and (5) comply with the requirements found in the most recent version of "Rules Governing the Use of the Green Seal Certification Mark."

**H. Disclaimer of Liability.** Green Seal™, in performing its functions in accordance with its objectives, does not assume or undertake to discharge any responsibility of the manufacturer or any other party. Green Seal shall not incur any obligations or liability for damages, including consequential damages, arising out of or in connection with the interpretation of, reliance upon, or any other use of this Standard.

**I. Care in Testing.** Many tests required by Green Seal's Standards involve safety considerations. Adequate safeguards for personnel and property should be employed in conducting such tests.

**J. Referenced Standards.** Standards referenced in this document may have been superseded by a later edition, and it is intended that the most recent edition of all referenced standards be used in determining compliance of a product with this standard.

**K. Labeling Requirements.** This standard neither modifies nor supersedes government labeling requirements. Labeling language which varies in form from the requirements of this section may be used with the written approval of Green Seal.

## ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARD

### 1. Scope

This standard establishes environmental requirements for:

1.1. **Printing and writing paper.** The subcategories of paper included in this Standard are:

1.1.1. Blanks including papers for printed signs, point of purchase displays, window displays, posters and calendar backs.

1.1.2. Bond paper including letterhead, stationery, invoices, self-adhesive note paper, statement papers and duplicating papers for gelatin type of hectographic reproduction.

1.1.3. Bristols including file folders, index cards, ruled forms, mailing cards, tag papers, wedding invitations, and postal bristol.

1.1.4. Business forms including papers sold to be used in business forms and computer printout paper.

1.1.5 Copy paper including paper made for use in the high speed electrostatic reproduction process.

1.1.6 Cover paper including heavy papers sold for use as covers for books, catalogs, brochures, pamphlets and similar purposes.

1.1.7 Drawing paper including papers for architects, artists, and draftsmen for pen or pencil drawings and paper used primarily by school children for sketching, crayon, or watercolor work.

1.1.8 Labels including labels for file folders, mailing, shipping, and similar purposes.

1.1.9 Ledger paper including paper used in bound and loose-leaf ledger books, accounting record systems, and legal paper.

1.1.10 Lightweight printing paper including high quality, high opacity lightweight papers used in bibles, dictionaries, manuals, and professional reference books to reduce bulk.

1.1.11. Manifold and onionskin paper including paper used for airmail stationery, catalogs, manuals, envelope enclosures, advertisements and carbon copies of correspondence and legal documents.

1.1.12. Tablet paper including loose leaf paper, notebooks, note pads, adding machine rolls, and cash register rolls.

1.1.13. Text paper including paper used in annual reports, booklets, menus, announcements, advertising and corporate advertising circulars.

1.1.14. Uncoated groundwood free papers including uncoated paper used for personalized computer generated letters and promotional mailings in the business forms industry, book manufacturing, magazine blow cards, and duplicating paper for spirit machines.

1.1.15. Gift wrapping paper including plain and decorated wrapping papers, not including packaging or packaging materials.

1.1.16. Other recycled printing and writing paper including all other paper sold primarily for use in printing and writing.

**1.2. Paper specifically excluded from this Standard.** This standard specifically does not include the following paper:

1.2.1. Uncoated groundwood papers including Newsprint. [Newsprint is covered by Green Seal Standard GS-15.]

1.2.2. Packaging materials.

1.2.3 Tissue products. [Tissue Products area covered by Green Seal Standards GS-1 and GS-9.]

1.2.4. Specialty papers such as carbon paper and carbonless carbon paper.

1.2.5. Coated groundwood paper and coated groundwood free printing paper. [These products are covered by Green Seal Standard GS-10.]

## **2 Definitions**

2.1. “Postconsumer material” means those finished products, packages or materials generated by a business or consumer that have served their intended end uses and that have been recovered from or otherwise diverted from the waste stream for the purpose of recycling.

2.2. “Recovered materials” means waste materials and by-products which have been recovered or diverted from solid waste, but such term does not include those materials and by-products generated from, and commonly reused within, an original manufacturing process.

### 3. Product-Specific Performance Requirements

The product must be made in accordance with reasonable industry practice with respect to quality and performance.

### 4. Product-Specific Environmental Requirements

The product must meet the requirements under **either** section 4.1 (Recycled Content Requirements) **or** section 4.2 (Production Process Requirements.).

#### 4.1 Recycled Content Requirements

4.1.1 For high-speed copy paper, offset paper, forms bond, computer printout paper, file folders, and white woven envelopes, and for other uncoated printing and writing paper, such as writing and office paper, book paper, cotton fiber paper, and cover stock, the product shall contain at least 30 percent postconsumer materials.

4.1.2 The percentage of recovered material and postconsumer material shall be calculated and certified based on the **fiber** weight of the paper. Calculations will also be performed based on the total weight of the paper.

4.1.3 The calculation of recycled content based on fiber weight shall be performed using the following formulas.

4.1.3.1 Recovered Material:

$$\frac{\text{(Recovered Material x Yield)}}{[(\text{Virgin Pulp x Yield}) + (\text{Recovered Material x Yield})]}$$

4.1.3.2 Postconsumer Material:

$$\frac{\text{(Postconsumer Material x Yield)}}{[(\text{Virgin Pulp x Yield}) + (\text{Recovered Material x Yield})]}$$

4.1.4 The calculation of recycled content based on total weight shall be performed using the following formulas:

4.1.4.1 Recovered Material:

$$\frac{(\text{Recovered Material} \times \text{Yield})}{[(\text{Non-Fibrous Material} \times \text{Yield}) + (\text{Virgin Pulp} \times \text{Yield}) + (\text{Recovered Material} \times \text{Yield})]}$$

4.1.4.2 Postconsumer Material:

$$\frac{(\text{Postconsumer Material} \times \text{Yield})}{[(\text{Non-Fibrous Material} \times \text{Yield}) + (\text{Virgin Pulp} \times \text{Yield}) + (\text{Recovered Material} \times \text{Yield})]}$$

4.1.5 Yield loss will depend on the product manufactured, the raw material, the level of contaminants and the cleaning and deinking technology employed. The percentage yield shall be calculated by dividing the total material output by the total material input.<sup>1</sup>

4.1.6 The percentage of recovered material and postconsumer material shall be calculated based on a weighted average of the materials used for a period of time not to exceed the previous three months.

## 4.2 Production Process Requirements

4.2.1 If recovered material is used to manufacture the product, it shall not be deinked using a solvent containing chlorine or one listed by the Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA), 40 CFR Section 372.

4.2.2 Neither chlorine nor any of its derivatives (such as hypochlorite and chlorine dioxide) shall be used in the bleaching agent if bleaching is employed in the manufacturing of virgin pulp used in the product, in the processing of recovered material, or in the manufacturing of the product itself.

## 5. Toxics in Packaging

5.1 The sum of the concentration levels of lead, cadmium, mercury, and hexavalent chromium present in any package or packaging component shall not exceed 100 parts per million by weight.

<sup>1</sup> If a particular manufacturer's operating procedures do not provide for accurate yield measurements, the following shall be used as default values:

Recovered/Postconsumer Material: 70%

Virgin Pulp: 100%

Non-fibrous material: 100%

**Appendix: Labeling Requirements for Certification by Green Seal™**

Unless otherwise approved in writing by Green Seal the following labeling requirements shall apply:

1. The Green Seal Certification Mark must appear on the product's packaging. It may also be printed, embossed or watermarked on the product by the product manufacturer. Wherever the Green Seal Certification Mark appears on a package, the package shall contain a description of the basis of certification. This description shall be in a location, style, and typeface that are easily readable by the consumers.
2. The Green Seal Certification Mark shall not be used in conjunction with any modifying terms, phrases, or graphic images that might mislead consumers as to the extent or nature of the certification.
3. If the product is being certified for meeting the requirements of Section 4.1. wherever it appears the Green Seal Certification Mark shall be accompanied by the phrase, "Certified XX% postconsumer material." The phrase, "Meets Federal procurement guidelines," may also be included.
4. If the product is being certified for meeting the requirements of section.4.2, wherever it appears the Green Seal Certification Mark shall be accompanied by one of the following phrases, as appropriate:

The description shall read as follows for unbleached products:

**Product manufactured without bleaching. Recycled content may have originally been bleached.**

For whitened or bleached products, as applicable:

**No chlorine bleach used to manufacture this product. Recycled content may have originally been bleached with chlorine.**

**Product bleached with oxygen. Recycled content may have originally been bleached with chlorine.**

5. Labeling language which varies from the requirements of this section may be used with the written approval of Green Seal. In the event of a conflict between a Green Seal labeling requirement and a government labeling requirement, the government requirement will take precedence.