



GS-16  
Green Seal™ Environmental Standard for  
Reusable Utility Bags

**First Edition**  
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THE MARK OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

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## 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:

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## 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.

## **GREEN SEAL ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARD FOR REUSABLE UTILITY BAGS**

### **1.0 SCOPE**

This Standard establishes environmental requirements for all reusable utility bags.

### **2.0 DEFINITIONS**

“Reusable utility bags” are sacks made of various natural or synthetic materials that are designed to hold for hang-carrying a variety of goods or commodities and that are capable of being used many times. Utility bags may include shopping bags, lunch bags, bank security or deposit bags, etc.

### **3.0 PRODUCT-SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS**

**3.1** The product must be made of strong and durable materials, which may be reinforced by rivets or other strengthening parts.

**3.2** The product must have a minimum lifetime of 300 uses carrying typical loads under wet conditions, as tested by performance tests of the Canadian Environmental Choice Program where applicable.

### **4.0 LABELING REQUIREMENTS**

**4.1** The Green Seal certification mark must appear on the product.

**4.2** 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.

**4.3** Whenever the certification mark appears on a package or product, the product or package must contain a description of the basis for the certification. The description shall be in a location, style, and typeface that are easily readable by the consumer. Unless otherwise approved in writing by Green Seal, the description shall read as follows:

This product meets Green Seal environmental standards for being a reusable utility bag certified for at least 300 uses.