



Green Claims

Green claims and labels help consumers to make informed purchasing decisions. By providing accurate information, a company can enhance its credentials and demonstrate that it is responsible. Therefore in 1998 the UK Government launched its Green Claims Code which sets out the standard of information that the public can expect to be given about the environmental impacts of consumer products. The code is a set of easy-to-follow principles about how to make a good environmental claim.

In 2003 the UK Government supplemented the Code with the publication of 'Practical Guidance' designed to help businesses apply the code by providing further information and practical examples. In the process of producing the 'Practical Guidance', sector-specific guidance was also developed where research showed it would be useful. One of the sectorial guides was agreed with the aerosol industry as represented by BAMA.

In February 2011, after extensive consultation, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (defra) issued an update to the guidance (now called 'Green Claims Guidance'). This update reflects developments in the understanding of environmental issues and the emergence of new tools for quantifying impacts. The new guidance is available on the defra web page [Green Claims and Labels](#). The page also provides links to a range of other tools and resources for both mandatory and voluntary schemes to help business provide useful and accurate information, which is fair and not misleading. By following the Guidance companies can ensure that claims are meaningful and in line with existing standards and codes, International Standard ISO 14021 and the European Commission Guidelines for making and assessing environmental claims. The guidance is not intended to replace these codes but to provide user-friendly interpretative guidance on how to apply them.

Green Claims for Aerosols

The aerosol sector green claims guidance focuses on two issues, the misperception that aerosols use chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) as propellants and the desire to promote recycling of empty aerosols.

Claims relating to CFCs

The sale of aerosols containing CFCs has been prohibited in the UK since 2000; in fact CFCs have not been used in aerosols (except for metered dose inhalers) since 1989. Given this situation it is recommended that companies do not make claims such as:

- 'CFC free'
- 'this aerosol contains no CFCs'

Such claims imply that the aerosol is in some way exceptional and this could be misleading for consumers. However, research shows that consumer concern over the use of CFCs in aerosols still exists, so in 2003 BAMA and the UK Government agreed that companies that wish to make a claim on this issue should use the phrase:

Aerosols do not contain CFCs

This wording has the advantage of providing information on the whole industry, not just the aerosol on which it appears. It is anticipated that this claim will also ultimately become redundant as consumers realise CFCs are no longer used in aerosols, but this is taking longer than initially anticipated.

Claims relating to Recycling

Health and safety studies show that empty aerosols may be safely included with other metal packaging material in recycling schemes. In accordance with ISO 14021, statements concerning recycling of aerosols should only be made on aerosols sold into a market in which it is known that the recycling infrastructure exists. As in the UK over 80% of local authorities explicitly accept empty aerosols in their recycling schemes, the following statement may be used to inform consumers of the suitability of the empty aerosol for recycling and to encourage this recycling:

Please recycle – when empty

Other Claims

If you intend to make an environmental claim not covered above, you may find it useful to refer to the more general advice in the Green Claims Guidance – How to make a good environmental claim available on line at [Green Claims Guidance](#).

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