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Guidance

# **Make an environmental claim for your product, service or organisation**

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# 1. Principles of making an environmental claim

When you make an environmental claim for your product, service or organisation, you should make sure:

- it's not misleading
- your messages are clear and accurate
- the data you use is objective and transparent

## 2. Make sure your claim isn't misleading

Make sure that what you're claiming:

- doesn't cause another environmental problem
- doesn't suggest a greater benefit than it does
- isn't claiming a benefit from something in common use, or from the absence of something not in common use (for instance "100% CFC-free aerosol")
- is something you've chosen to do beyond the legal requirements for your product

### 2.1 Make fair comparisons with competitors

When making comparisons, you should only compare your process or product with:

- your previous process or product
- another organisation's process or product
- an industry standard

If you compare your product or process with a competitor's, you should make sure your claim:

- uses standard measurements, like miles per gallon (mpg) for vehicle fuel consumption
- compares only with direct competitors that do the same job in the same category and marketplace
- doesn't suggest an advantage over a rival product if there is no information to support the comparison

### 2.2 Use relevant pictures

You should only use pictures that relate directly to the benefit you're claiming and don't suggest something more.

You should only use logos or symbols that represent the environmental standards your product has been officially certified for.

## 3. Make your messages clear and accurate

Your claim should:

- accurately represent the scale of the environmental benefit your product provides
- describe a specific measurable impact or process – don't use vague terms like 'eco' and 'environmentally friendly'
- use specific measurements or standards, for example ISO, CEN, BSI

- use plain, specific language without jargon
- be clear if it refers to the whole organisation or just one area of your business

Only use symbols, pictures or labels that directly support the claim you're making.

## 4. Data to support your claims

Make sure any data you use is:

- factual and referenced – think how a consumer might interpret your claim
- agreed – don't base a claim on something that's not generally agreed by scientists
- current – use the latest guidance, methods and measures in your claim
- clear about the approach you've taken
- available to anyone who wants it
- reviewed and updated over time to keep it relevant

If your claims are about a target you're aiming to meet in the future, make sure:

- details of any claims are publicly available
- it's feasible you could achieve the aim
- you make information about your progress publicly available

## 5. EU Ecolabel

An EU Ecolabel shows that your product or service meets a specific Europe-wide environmental standard.

Find out if your product is eligible for an EU Ecolabel (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-for-an-eu-ecolabel>).

## 6. Organisations that enforce environmental claims

Defra has no enforcement role on environmental claims except for the EU Ecolabel. Other bodies have a role in enforcing or regulating environmental claims. You can go to them for advice or further information.

### 6.1 Trading Standards

Use Trading Standards for advice on how to deal with complaints.

Enforces consumer protection legislation and can advise you on how to deal with complaints. Phone the Citizens Advice consumer helpline on 03454 040506 or find your local Trading Standards office (<http://www.tradingstandards.uk/advice/index.cfm#postcodesearchform>).

In Northern Ireland the enforcement body is the Trading Standards Service of the Department for the Economy.

### 6.2 Advertising Standards Authority (ASA)

ASA deals with complaints about advertisements, promotions and broadcast adverts. ASA makes sure CAP and BCAP advertising standards codes (<https://www.cap.org.uk/Advertising-Codes.aspx>) are applied.

### **6.3 Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP)**

CAP writes the non-broadcast Advertising Code and provides pre-publication advice through its Copy Advice service (<https://www.cap.org.uk/Advice-Training-on-the-rules/Bespoke-Copy-Advice.aspx>). It approves UK TV and radio adverts through Clearcast (<http://www.clearcast.co.uk/>) and the Radio Advertising Clearance Centre (<http://www.radiocentre.org/clearance/>).

### **6.4 Trading Standards Institute**

The Trading Standards Institute gives businesses general guidance on how to comply with consumer protection legislation (<https://www.gov.uk/consumer-protection-rights>).

## **7. Relevant legislation**

Before making green claims, you should check if the law requires you to state or publish environmental information about your product. You should check the following legislation:

- EU Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD)  
([http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer\\_rights/unfair-trade/unfair-practices/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/consumer_rights/unfair-trade/unfair-practices/index_en.htm))
- The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008  
(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2008/9780110811574/contents>) (CPRs)
- The Business Protection from Misleading Marketing Regulations 2008  
(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2008/1276/contents/made>) (BPRs)
- The Sale and Supply of Goods to Consumers Regulations 2002  
(<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2002/3045/contents/made>)

## **8. Industry specific guidance**

You can find specific guidance on making green claims for products in the following industries:

- aerosols ([http://www.bama.co.uk/pdf/green\\_claims.pdf](http://www.bama.co.uk/pdf/green_claims.pdf))
- automotive (<http://www.smmmt.co.uk/2013/12/best-practice-principles-environmental-claims/>)
- cleaning products (<http://www.ukcpi.org/green-cleaning/green-claims-guidance>)