



Environmental Standard - Certification Criteria Document

# CCD 126: Plastic Film Products

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# EcoLogo Standard: CCD 126

## Plastic Film Products



### Table of Contents

Introduction .....	1
Notice .....	1
Notice of Intent .....	1
Definitions .....	2
Category Definition .....	4
General Requirements .....	4
Product Specific Requirements for Recycled Content Claims .....	5
Product Specific Requirements for Biodegradability Claims .....	6
Socially and Environmentally Responsible Manufacturing .....	7
Verification .....	7
Conditions for EcoLogo® Use .....	7

# EcoLogo Standard: CCD 126

## Plastic Film Products



### Introduction

The EcoLogo® Program is designed to support a continuing effort to improve and/or maintain environmental quality by reducing energy and materials consumption and by minimizing the impacts of pollution generated by the production, use and disposal of goods and services.

EcoLogo® is a Government of Canada official mark used under license from Environment Canada. TerraChoice is not an agent of Environment Canada.

The requirements of the EcoLogo Plastic Film Products Standard, CCD-126, are intended to recognize products on the market that are environmentally preferable. The criteria are based on a review of currently available life cycle impacts and consideration of the markets and stakeholder input.

Life cycle review, standards development and revision are ongoing processes. As information and technology change, the product category requirements will be reviewed and possibly amended.

At this time, “oxo-degradable” and “oxo-biodegradable” plastic film products will not be allowed to carry the EcoLogo®. Inherent biodegradability by existing standard test methods has not been demonstrated for these products.<sup>1</sup> The EcoLogo® Program reserves the right to consider these products at a later time.

### Notice

Any reference to a standard means to the latest edition of that standard.

The EcoLogo® Program reserves the right to accept equivalent test data for the test methods specified in this document.

### Notice of Intent

The criteria in this standard will be re-evaluated from time to time to maintain the relevance of the requirements in light of changing environmental knowledge, manufacturing advances, regulatory conditions and other changes in the marketplace. Further revisions of this document may introduce:

- increased requirements for post-consumer recycled material;
- increased requirements for household post-consumer recycled material.

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<sup>1</sup> *Position Paper “Oxo-Biodegradable” Plastics*, Berlin, July 2009, European Bioplastics

## Definitions

1) In this standard:

**"agricultural film"** means film, whether or not in rolls, used to preserve fodder, as a replacement for glass in greenhouses, as row covers, hay bags, silo caps, trench silo covers, plant bed covers, and for composting;

**"agricultural mulch film"** means film, whether or not in rolls, used in the ground, under the root systems of plants, to facilitate crop cultivation;

**"ASTM"** means American Society for Testing and Materials;

**"biodegradable plastic"** means a degradable plastic in which the degradation results from the action of naturally occurring microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, and algae (Reprinted from Standard Terminology Relating to Plastics, ASTM D0883-2011);;

**"by-product"** means a secondary product made during the manufacture of another product. A production residue may be considered a by-product if it possesses characteristics that make it ready for further use in the economy; its further use must be a certainty without any further processing, and as part of a continuing process of production;

**"compostable plastic"** means a plastic that undergoes degradation by biological processes during composting to yield CO<sub>2</sub>, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass at a rate consistent with other known compostable materials and leave no visible, distinguishable or toxic residue (Reprinted from Standard Terminology Relating to Plastics, ASTM D0883-2011);

**"composting"** means a managed process that controls the biological decomposition and transformation of biodegradable materials into a humus-like substance called compost: the aerobic mesophilic and thermophilic degradation of organic matter to make compost; the transformation of biologically decomposable material through a controlled process of biooxidation that proceed through mesophilic and thermophilic phases and results in the production of carbon dioxide, water, minerals, and stabilized organic matter (compost or humus) (Reprinted from Standard Specification for Compostable Plastics, ASTM D6400-2004);

**"construction film"** means film, whether or not reinforced, laminated, supported or similarly combined with other materials, used in the construction industry (e.g., tarpaulins, drop sheets, and wind screens), excluding products intended for use as vapour barrier films;

**"drum and other liners"** means film, whether or not in rolls, and whether or not reinforced, laminated, supported or similarly combined with other materials, intended for use inside industrial shipping containers;

# EcoLogo Standard: CCD 126

## Plastic Film Products



**"garbage bags"** means film bags or sacks manufactured for intended use as a container to hold, store or transport materials to be discarded, composted or recycled, including, but not limited to, garbage bags, composting bags, lawn and leaf bags, can-liner bags, kitchen bags, compactor bags, and recycling bags;

**"grocery carry-out sacks"** means film sacks or bags intended for the conveyance of grocery products;

**"household post-consumer recycled material"** means household material which has served its end-use at the consumer level, has been discarded by the consumer, and would, unless diverted, enter the waste stream;

**"industrial stretch wrap"** means film that is stretched during application and shrinks without the use of heat to unitize loads of goods shipped on pallets;

**"PFMAC"** means the Plastic Film Manufacturers' Association of Canada;

**"post-consumer recycled material"** means material which has served its end-use at the consumer level, has been discarded by the consumer, and would, unless diverted, enter the waste stream. For the purpose of this standard, this includes commercial and industrial post-consumer recycled material. Household post-consumer recycled material will be considered as a separate category;

**"pre-consumer recycled material"** means material generated by an industrial process that would, unless diverted, enter the waste stream. This includes, but is not limited to, damaged or defective materials, overstock or obsolete inventories from manufacturers, distributors, and wholesalers. This includes scrap film that is reprocessed to new pellets. Excluded is the reutilization of materials generated in a manufacturing process and capable of being reused as a substitute for raw material without being modified in any way;

**"recycled material"** means post-consumer material and pre-consumer material. It does not include by-products of an industrial process that can be, and regularly are, used in either the same process, or in a different process, except that proportion which originated as post-consumer material and pre-consumer material.

**"retail sacks"** means film sacks or bags intended for the conveyance of non-grocery retail merchandise;

**"shrink film case wrap"** means film that has been stretched during manufacture and reverts to its original dimensions when heated.

## Category Definition

- 2) This category includes all plastic film products, including biodegradable and compostable products, as further defined in the sub-categories in this section. The subcategories are:
- (a) garbage bags;
  - (b) grocery carry-out sacks;
  - (c) retail sacks;
  - (d) industrial shipping sacks;
  - (e) shrink film case wrap;
  - (f) industrial stretch wrap;
  - (g) drum and other liners;
  - (h) construction films;
  - (i) agricultural films;
  - (i) agricultural mulch films.

## General Requirements

- 3) To be authorized to carry the EcoLogo<sup>®</sup>, ALL plastic film products must:
- (a) meet or exceed all applicable governmental and industrial safety and performance standards; and
  - (b) be manufactured and transported in such a manner that all steps of the process, including the disposal and recycling of waste products arising therefrom, will meet the requirements of all applicable governmental acts, by laws and regulations.

### Heavy Metals

- (c) not be manufactured or printed with and/or contain intentionally added heavy metals of lead, mercury, cadmium and hexavalent chromium, excepting those added as result of using recycled content, the sum of which shall not exceed 100 ppm by weight.

### Packaging and Labeling

- (d) be packaged in materials, including primary and secondary packaging, that:
  - (i) do not contain intentionally added heavy metals of lead, mercury, cadmium and hexavalent chromium, excepting those added as result of using recycled content, the sum of which shall not exceed 100 ppm by weight;
  - (ii) contain a minimum post-consumer recycled content of 25%, or be comprised of a minimum of 75% by weight recyclable or compostable materials;
  - (iii) if plastic:
    - (a) be made from plastic resin codes 1, 2 and 5 (as defined in ASTM D7611 / D7611M - 10 Standard Practice for Coding Plastic Manufactured Articles for Resin Identification),
    - (b) be clearly marked with the appropriate Society of Plastics Industry recycling classification,

- (c) be recyclable, refillable, represent a source-reduced package, or contain a minimum post-consumer content of 25%.

## Product Specific Requirements for Recycled Content Claims

- 4) To be authorized to carry the EcoLogo the plastic film product must meet the criteria specific to its subcategory. Products meeting the "Product Specific Claims for Biodegradability" do not need to meet these criteria.

### 4.1 Garbage bags must contain a minimum of:

- (a) 20% post-consumer material, of which at least 5% of the total product is household post-consumer;

OR

- (b) 100% of the sourced polymer as pre-consumer recycled material.

### 4.2 Grocery carry-out sacks must:

- (a) conform to the requirements of the PFMAC's Performance Test For Plastic Grocery Carry-out Sacks;
- (b) contain a minimum of:
  - (i) 20% post-consumer material;
  - (ii) of which at least 5% of the total product must be household post-consumer material.

### 4.3 Retail sacks must:

- (a) contain a minimum of:
  - (i) 20% post-consumer material,
  - (ii) of which at least 5% of the total product must be household post-consumer material.

### 4.4 Industrial shipping sacks must:

- (a) contain a minimum of:
  - (i) 25% recycled material;
  - (ii) of which at least 5% of the total product must be post-consumer material.

### 4.5 Shrink film case wrap must:

- (a) contain a minimum of:
  - (i) 20% post-consumer material;
  - (ii) of which at least 5% of the total product must be household post-consumer material.

# EcoLogo Standard: CCD 126

## Plastic Film Products



### 4.6 Industrial stretch wrap must:

- (a) contain a minimum of 20% post-consumer material.

### 4.7 Drum and other liners must:

- (a) contain a minimum of:
  - (i) 50% recycled material;
  - (ii) of which at least 20% of the total product must be post-consumer material;
  - (iii) of which at least 5% of the total product must be household post-consumer material.

### 4.8 Construction films must:

- (a) contain a minimum of:
  - (i) 50% recycled material;
  - (ii) of which at least 20% of the total product must be post-consumer material;
  - (iii) of which at least 5% of the total product must be household post-consumer material.

### 4.9 Agricultural films must:

- (a) contain a minimum of:
  - (i) 20% recycled material;
  - (ii) of which at least 5% of the total product must be household post-consumer material.

### 4.10 Agricultural mulch films must:

- (a) contain a minimum of:
  - (i) 25% recycled material;
  - (ii) of which at least 5% of the total product must be household post-consumer material.

## Product Specific Requirements for Biodegradability Claims

- 5) To be authorized to carry the EcoLogo, when a product being certified claims biodegradability, the product must be tested in accordance with section (a) for product intended for composting and section (b) for products intended for anaerobic digestion (AD) systems. Resin materials intended to be used in manufacture of coated compostable or AD bags must pass the appropriate section, (a) for compostable or (b) for AD, as a film of approximately the same thickness as the intended use.
  - (a) Products not containing a paper film intended to be disposed of in composting systems must meet the requirements of ASTM D6400 or EN 14995 and meet the requirements for labeling of materials and products as "compostable in municipal and industrial composting facilities" as specified by ASTM D6400<sup>2</sup>. Products consisting of a plastic coating on paper or other compostable substrate or a resin intended to be used on paper or other compostable substrates must pass ASTM D6868 or EN 13432.

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<sup>2</sup> ASTM D6400, Standard Specification for Compostable Plastics



# EcoLogo Standard: CCD 126

## Plastic Film Products



- (b) For products intended to be disposed of in Anaerobic Digestion systems, the product must pass the requirements for AD systems in EN 14995. ASTM D5210 can be substituted for ISO 11734 when determining the biodegradability in EN 14995. Products passing the anaerobic digestion requirements of EN 14995 shall be labeled as “compatible with commercial anaerobic digestion facilities based on EN 14995”.

## Socially and Environmentally Responsible Manufacturing

Socially and environmentally responsible manufacturing includes careful attention to both environmental management and working conditions. This section includes criteria for assessing and improving environmental and workplace management.

- 6) To be authorized to carry the EcoLogo, the following requirements must be met:
  - (a) Manufacturers must document compliance with local, regional and national environmental and occupational health and safety requirements. Violations must be reported along with plans for addressing noncompliance;
  - (b) Manufacturing facilities must provide documentation that they have in place an effective environmental management system. Facilities that are certified to ISO 14001, EMAS, or another equivalent certification will be considered to have met this criterion. Manufacturing facilities that do not hold an EMS certification must provide written documentation of their environmental management system;
  - (c) Material Safety Data Sheets should be available publicly and/or upon request.

## Verification

- 7) To verify a claim that a product meets the criteria listed in the document, the EcoLogo® Program will require access, as is its normal practice, to relevant quality control and production records and the right of access to production facilities on an announced basis.
- 8) Compliance with sections 3(a) and 3(b) shall be attested to by a signed statement of the Chief Executive Officer or the equivalent officer of the manufacturer. The EcoLogo® Program shall be advised in writing immediately by the licensee of any non-compliance which may occur during the term of the license. On the occurrence of any non-compliance, the license may be suspended or terminated as stipulated in the license agreement.

## Conditions for EcoLogo® Use

- 9) The EcoLogo® may appear on wholesale or retail packaging, or on the product itself, provided that the product meets the requirements in this document.
- 10) It is required that a criteria number appears with the EcoLogo® whenever the EcoLogo® is used in association with the plastic film product. The intent of including the number is to provide

# EcoLogo Standard: CCD 126

## Plastic Film Products



clarification as to what the product is certified against. This is to ensure no ambiguity over, or misrepresentation of, the reason(s) for certification.

The criteria statement must be specific to the product's sub-category.

For sub-category 2(a), the recommended criteria statement is "Garbage Bags";  
For sub-category 2(b), the recommended criteria statement is "Grocery Sacks";  
For sub-category 2(c), the recommended criteria statement is "Retail Sacks";  
For sub-category 2(d), the recommended criteria statement is "Shipping Sack";  
For sub-category 2(e), the recommended criteria statement is "Shrink Film Case Wrap";  
For sub-category 2(f), the recommended criteria statement is "Stretch Wrap";  
For sub-category 2(g), the recommended criteria statement is either "Drum Liner;" or "[other] Liner;" as appropriate;  
For sub-category 2(h), the recommended criteria statement is "Construction Film";  
For sub-category 2(i), the recommended criteria statement is "Agricultural Film"; and  
For sub-category 2(j), the recommended criteria statement is "Agricultural Mulch Film".

The licensee may propose other wording for the criteria statement, but any such proposed wording must be approved by the EcoLogo® Program.

- 11) All licensees and authorized users must comply with the Program's *Guide to Proper Use of the EcoLogo®* regarding the format and usage of the EcoLogo®.
- 12) Any accompanying advertising must conform with the relevant requirements stipulated in this document, the license agreement and the Program's *Guide to Proper Use of the EcoLogo®*.

**For additional copies of this criteria document or for more information about the EcoLogo® Program, please contact:**

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