



Green

Are you sure
that's what
you're getting?

Are you being “Greenwashed”?

In today's marketplace many consumers of towel and tissue products incorporate environmental considerations in their buying decisions. This includes following mandates or policies to be green or simply wanting to create a healthier environment for their tenants, citizens, or employees. However, because of the sheer number of paper products and manufacturers now claiming to offer green products in the away-from-home market, many consumers and buyers of these products are confused by the packaging, marketing, and environmental claims. Unfortunately, not all of the products associated with being green are truly environmentally preferable. Buyers and consumers now have to be aware of “greenwashing” which, simply defined, is misleading claims about the environmental benefits of a product.

Wausau Paper has published this resource guide to help sort “fact from fiction” regarding the environmental attributes of towel and tissue products to help consumers and buyers make more informed decisions.

“fact from fiction”

1 Green Seal Certification

Green Seal is an independent, non-profit organization dedicated to safeguarding the environment and transforming the marketplace by promoting the manufacture, purchase, and use of environmentally responsible products. Green Seal offers credible, unbiased third-party certification standards for over 43 product and service categories including towel and tissue products. The Green Seal certification guarantees consumers / buyers that products bearing the Green Seal have been manufactured to strict environmental standards taking the guesswork out of the green evaluation process for the purchaser or decision maker. There are other third-party certification standards available for towel and tissue products; however, the Green Seal standards are the most stringent and comprehensive.



The Green Seal standards for towel and tissue products (GS-1 & GS-9) involve multiple attributes, which means the standards deal with more than one aspect of what makes a product environmentally preferable including paper fiber, manufacturing, and product packaging.

2 Paper Fiber

Choosing a towel or tissue product that is 100% recycled is extremely important when looking for green paper products. Every ton of 100% recycled paper saves an estimated 4,100 kilowatt-hours of energy, 7,000 gallons of water, and 60 pounds of air pollutants/effluents¹. In addition, paper products made entirely from recovered materials keep more used paper from the waste stream. This is why Green Seal mandates that products must be 100% recycled to meet their environmental standards. Some manufacturers claim that their towel and tissue products made with only a portion of recycled materials are green when, in fact, these products contain the balance of their paper fiber as virgin fiber. In reality, these products are not green as they require more energy and water to produce as well as cause additional air pollutants or effluents. Furthermore, less paper is being diverted from the waste stream when paper products are not manufactured from 100% recycled materials.

Understanding the type of recycled materials that paper products are made of will also help in determining a green paper product. There are two types of recycled materials: recovered and post-consumer. Recovered materials include paper waste generated after the completion of the papermaking process such as bindery trimmings, obsolete inventories, or rejected stock.

Post-consumer materials include any item that has already been used by consumers for its intended purpose and would otherwise be sent to landfills. Post-consumer materials include newspapers, old cardboard boxes, or any other paper products brought to recycling centers or set out for curbside pickup.

Purchasing products with a high-level of post-consumer wastepaper channels the greatest amount of waste away from our landfills. Thus, choosing products with high levels of post-consumer waste content is another important attribute of an environmentally preferable towel and tissue product.



¹Green Seal's Choose Green Report - Bathroom Tissue and Paper Towels, March 2004.

DID YOU KNOW?

Don't be confused by ECF and PCF! When choosing towels and tissue, ask the manufacturer about their bleaching and deinking processes. Only 100% recycled towels and tissue manufactured processed chlorine free (PCF) are truly environmentally preferable.

3

Manufacturing: Bleaching & Deinking

The process for how paper is manufactured is critical in evaluating green products. The Green Seal standards mandate that towels and tissue cannot be manufactured with any added inks, dyes, fragrances or pigments. Furthermore, wastepaper cannot be bleached or deinked with chlorine or any of its derivatives such as hypochlorite and chlorine dioxide. This is known as being processed chlorine free (PCF). There are some manufacturers that claim their towel and tissue products are bleached using an elemental chlorine free (ECF) process. Many consumers/buyers misinterpret the ECF term as being the same as processed chlorine free, however, it is not. Elemental chlorine free means the paper products are bleached with a chlorine derivative such as chlorine dioxide rather than with chlorine gas. The ECF process, along with true chlorine bleaching, can be harmful to aquatic life and wildlife as highly dangerous chemicals such as dioxins can be released when chlorine or its derivatives are used in manufacturing towels and tissue.

DID YOU KNOW?

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes recommended recovered and post-consumer fiber content levels in its Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines for Commercial Sanitary Tissue Products. For paper towels, the EPA recommends a minimum of 40% post-consumer wastepaper content and a minimum of 20% post-consumer wastepaper content for bathroom tissue. Any product that claims to be green should at least meet these minimum requirements in addition to being made of 100% recovered materials. Do not hesitate to ask manufacturers to verify, in writing, the levels of recycled content and post-consumer wastepaper in their towel and tissue products.



4

Product Packaging

Since most product packaging ends up in the waste stream, how the product is packaged is a significant component to whether a paper product is considered green. Packaging should be properly sized to eliminate excess packaging and reduce waste that may ultimately go to landfills. The Green Seal standards address source reduction by outlining minimum square feet requirements for bath and facial tissue products to reduce waste. Including recycled or recyclable materials in product packaging also aids in environmental stewardship. Green Seal standards instruct that cores in the roll towels and bath tissue as



well as the box for facial tissue be made from 100% recycled materials. In addition, packaging cannot contain or be printed with toxic metals or other harmful chemicals including lead, cadmium, mercury and hexavalent chromium in excess of 100 parts per million (above trace levels).

DID YOU KNOW?

Green Seal mandates that bath tissue contain a minimum of 40 square feet of product per roll and for facial tissue, at least 70 square feet of product per inner box. This helps eliminate excess packaging for these items, saving waste.

Environmentally preferable packaging is more than just source reduction. Therefore, determining a product's green status should not be solely based upon this single attribute. Ask about paper fiber and manufacturing processes in addition to packaging materials and generated waste to conclude whether a product is green.

5

Industry Organizations

There are several green industry organizations that allow membership for those individuals, partners or manufacturers that wish to align with the organization's goals or objectives such as the U.S. Green Building Council, "Green" Hotels Association®, and the Green Restaurant Association. Many manufacturers, including Wausau Paper, are members of these various industry organizations and some choose to include organizations' logos in print advertising and on product packaging. However, the use of these logos is not and should not be confused with a third-party certification for green products. The U.S. Green Building Council, "Green" Hotels Association®, Green Restaurant Association, and other industry organizations are a tremendous resource for those wanting to understand more about green issues, as it relates to facilities, hotels and restaurants. We invite you to visit their websites to learn more:

U.S. Green Building Council – www.usgbc.org
 "Green" Hotels Association® - www.greenhotels.com
 Green Restaurant Association – www.dinegreen.com

The Industry Leader in Green Products



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