



Standard for Printing and Writing Paper (GS-7)

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Edition 6.1

Green Seal, Inc. | [greenseal.org](https://www.greenseal.org)

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Green Seal

Green Seal is a nonprofit organization with a mission to transform the economy for a healthier, greener world. Green Seal sets leadership standards that aim to reduce the environmental and health impacts throughout the life cycle of products, services, and companies, to the extent technologically and economically feasible. The standards may be used for conformity assessment and public education.

Green Seal offers certification of products and services in conformance with its standards. For additional information on Green Seal and contact information, visit [greenseal.org](https://www.greenseal.org).

Table of Contents

Foreword..... 4

1.0 Scope..... 5

 1.1 Printing and Writing Paper. 5

 1.2 Paper Specifically Excluded from this Standard..... 6

2.0 Safer Chemicals..... 6

 2.1 Safer Ingredients 6

 2.1.1 Production Process Requirements 6

3.0 Responsible Sourcing 6

 3.1 Recycled Content Requirements..... 6

4.0 Sustainable Packaging 8

 4.1 Restricted Substances 8

 4.1.1 Heavy Metals 8

5.0 Verified Performance and Claims 8

 5.1 Product Performance..... 8

6.0 Trademark Use Requirements 8

 6.1 Trademark Use. 8

 6.2 Misleading Claims. 8

Annex A – Definitions of Terms (Normative) 9

Appendix 1 – Scope (Informative) 10

Foreword

General. The final issued standard was developed in an open and transparent process with stakeholder input that included producers, users, and general interests. Edition 6.1 was issued on July 12, 2013, and replaces the Sixth Edition from November 12, 1999. Corrections and/or clarifications were last made to this standard on August 23, 2024. Information on changes made to this standard are available on Green Seal's website.¹

The requirements in the standard are based on an assessment of the environmental, health, or social impacts associated with the products, services, or organizations covered in the scope of the standard. These requirements are subject to revision and generally cover aspects above and beyond regulatory compliance. This standard neither modifies nor supersedes laws and regulations. Any conformity assessment to this standard requires compliance with all applicable laws and regulations for the manufacturing and marketing of the products.

Provisions for safety have not been included in this standard since they are supervised by regulatory agencies. Adequate safeguards for personnel and property should be employed for all stages of production and for all tests that involve safety considerations.

Products, services, or organizations that are substantially similar to those covered by this standard in terms of function and life cycle considerations may be evaluated against the intent of the requirements of this standard, accounting for relevant differences between the intended scope of the standard and the actual product, service, or organization to be evaluated.

This standard may not anticipate a feature of the product that may significantly, and undesirably, increase its impact on the environment, health, or society. In such a situation, Green Seal will ordinarily amend a standard to account for the unanticipated environmental, health, or societal impacts.

Normative references (e.g., other standards) in this standard intend to refer to the most recent edition of the normative reference. Test methods may be required for product evaluation. Unless explicitly stated that a specified method is the only acceptable one, the intent of the standard is that an equivalent test method may be accepted, at Green Seal's sole discretion.

Certification to this standard shall be awarded only by Green Seal or, with Green Seal's explicit written permission, by a third-party certification program conducting on-site audits.

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¹ Library of Standards Documents, www.greenseal.org/green-seal-standards/library#section2

Green Seal Standard for Printing and Writing Paper, GS-7

1.0 Scope

This standard establishes requirements for:

1.1 Printing and Writing Paper. The subcategories of paper included in this Standard are:

1.1.1 Blanks including papers for printed signs, point of purchase displays, window displays, posters and calendar backs.

1.1.2 Bond paper including letterhead, stationery, invoices, self-adhesive note paper, statement papers and duplicating papers for gelatin type of hectographic reproduction.

1.1.3 Bristols including file folders, index cards, ruled forms, mailing cards, tag papers, wedding invitations, and postal bristol.

1.1.4 Business forms including papers sold to be used in business forms and computer printout paper.

1.1.5 Copy paper including paper made for use in the high-speed electrostatic reproduction process.

1.1.6 Cover paper including heavy papers sold for use as covers for books, catalogs, brochures, pamphlets and similar purposes.

1.1.7 Drawing paper including papers for architects, artists, and draftsmen for pen or pencil drawings and paper used primarily by school children for sketching, crayon, or watercolor work.

1.1.8 Labels including labels for file folders, mailing, shipping, and similar purposes.

1.1.9 Ledger paper including paper used in bound and loose-leaf ledger books, accounting record systems, and legal paper.

1.1.10 Lightweight printing paper including high quality, high opacity lightweight papers used in bibles, dictionaries, manuals, and professional reference books to reduce bulk.

1.1.11 Manifold and onionskin paper including paper used for airmail stationery, catalogs, manuals, envelope enclosures, advertisements and carbon copies of correspondence and legal documents.

1.1.12 Tablet paper including loose leaf paper, notebooks, note pads, adding machine rolls, and cash register rolls.

1.1.13 Text paper including paper used in annual reports, booklets, menus, announcements, advertising and corporate advertising circulars.

1.1.14 Uncoated groundwood free papers including uncoated paper used for personalized computer-generated letters and promotional mailings in the business forms industry, book manufacturing, magazine blow cards, and duplicating paper for spirit machines.

1.1.15 Gift wrapping paper including plain and decorated wrapping papers, not including packaging or packaging materials.

1.1.16 Other recycled printing and writing paper including all other paper sold primarily for use in printing and writing.

1.2 Paper Specifically Excluded from this Standard. This standard does not include the following paper: **1.2.1** Uncoated groundwood papers including Newsprint. [Newsprint is covered by Green Seal Standard GS-15.]

1.2.2 Packaging materials.

1.2.3 Tissue products. [Tissue Products area covered by Green Seal Standard GS-1.]

1.2.4 Specialty papers such as carbon paper and carbonless carbon paper.

1.2.5 Coated groundwood paper and coated groundwood free printing paper. [These products are covered by Green Seal Standard GS-10.]

See Appendix 1 for an example list of products included in this standard.

Words and phrases described in the standard that appear in *italics* have a corresponding definition located in the definition section of the standard, Annex A.

2.0 Safer Chemicals

The product must meet the requirements under **either** section 3.1 (Recycled Content Requirements) or section 2.1.1 (Production Process Requirements).

2.1 Safer Ingredients

2.1.1 Production Process Requirements

2.1.2 If *recovered material* is used to manufacture the product, it shall not be deinked using a solvent containing chlorine or one listed by the Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act, 40 Code of Federal Regulations Section 372.

2.1.3 Neither chlorine nor any of its derivatives (such as hypochlorite and chlorine dioxide) shall be used in the bleaching agent if bleaching is employed in the manufacturing of virgin pulp used in the product, in the processing of *recovered material*, or in the manufacturing of the product itself.

3.0 Responsible Sourcing

3.1 Recycled Content Requirements

3.1.1 For high-speed copy paper, offset paper, forms bond, computer printout paper, file folders, and white woven envelopes, and for other uncoated printing and writing paper, such as writing and office paper, book paper, cotton fiber paper, and cover stock, the product shall contain at least 30 percent *post-consumer materials*.

3.1.2 The percentage of *recovered material* and *post-consumer material* shall be calculated and certified based on the fiber weight of the paper. Calculations will also be performed based on the total weight of the paper.

3.1.3 The calculation of *recycled material* content based on fiber weight shall be performed using the following formulas.

3.1.3.1 *Recovered Material:*

$$\frac{(Recovered\ Material \times Yield)}{[(Virgin\ Pulp \times Yield) + (Recovered\ Material \times Yield)]}$$

3.1.3.2 *Post-Consumer Material:*

$$\frac{(Post-Consumer\ Material \times Yield)}{[(Virgin\ Pulp \times Yield) + (Recovered\ Material \times Yield)]}$$

3.1.4 The calculation of *recycled material* content based on total weight shall be performed using the following formulas:

3.1.4.1 *Recovered Material:*

$$\frac{(Recovered\ Material \times Yield)}{[(Non-Fibrous\ Material \times Yield) + (Virgin\ Pulp \times Yield) + (Recovered\ Material \times Yield)]}$$

3.1.4.2 *Post-Consumer Material:*

$$\frac{(Postconsumer\ Material \times Yield)}{[(Non-Fibrous\ Material \times Yield) + (Virgin\ Pulp \times Yield) + (Recovered\ Material \times Yield)]}$$

3.1.5 Yield loss will depend on the product manufactured, the raw material, the level of contaminants and the cleaning and deinking technology employed. The percentage yield shall be calculated by dividing the total material output by the total material input.²

² If a particular manufacturer's operating procedures do not provide for accurate yield measurements, the following shall be used as default values: *Recovered/Post-Consumer Material*: 70% *Virgin Pulp*: 100% *Non-fibrous material*: 100%

3.1.6 The percentage of *recovered material* and *post-consumer material* shall be calculated based on a weighted average of the materials used for a period of time not to exceed the previous three months.

4.0 Sustainable Packaging

4.1 Restricted Substances

4.1.1 Heavy Metals. The sum of the concentration levels of lead, cadmium, mercury, and hexavalent chromium present in any package or packaging component shall not exceed 100 parts per million by weight.

5.0 Verified Performance and Claims

5.1 Product Performance. The product must be made in accordance with reasonable industry practice with respect to quality and performance.

6.0 Trademark Use Requirements

6.1 Trademark Use. Any use of the Green Seal® Certification Mark or the Green Seal name, e.g., on the product, product label, packaging, secondary documents, or promotional materials, must be in accordance with Green Seal's Trademark Use Guidelines.³

6.2 Misleading Claims. Green Seal trademarks 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.

³ www.greenseal.org/trademark-use-guidelines

Annex A – Definitions of Terms (Normative)

Note that the defined terms are italicized throughout the standard.

Post-Consumer Material. Those finished products, packages or materials generated by a business or consumer that have served their intended end uses and that have been recovered from or otherwise diverted from the waste stream for the purpose of recycling.

Recovered Material. Waste materials and by-products which have been recovered or diverted from solid waste, but such term does not include those materials and by-products generated from, and commonly reused within, an original manufacturing process.

Appendix 1 – Scope (Informative)

Examples of products included in or excluded from the scope of GS-7:

Products Included in GS-7

- Blanks including papers for printed signs, point of purchase displays, window displays, posters and calendar backs.
- Bond paper
- Bristols
- Business forms
- Copy paper
- Cover paper
- Drawing paper
- Labels including labels for file folders, mailing, shipping, and similar purposes.
- Ledger paper
- Lightweight printing paper
- Manifold and onionskin paper
- Tablet paper
- Text paper
- Uncoated groundwood free papers
- Gift wrapping paper
- Other recycled printing and writing paper including all other paper sold primarily for use in printing and writing.

Products Excluded from GS-7

- Paper towels (included in GS-1)
- Napkins (included in GS-1)
- Nonwoven sanitary products
- General purpose disposable and flushable wipes
- Bathroom tissue (included in GS-1)
- Facial tissue (travel packs)
- Facial tissue (flat box and cube box) (included in GS-1)
- Toilet seat covers (included in GS-1)
- Placemats or tray liners (included in GS-1)
- Table coverings (included in GS-1)
- Paper products used in the preparation of food (included in GS-18)
- Coated groundwood paper and coated groundwood free printing paper (included in GS-10)
- Newspaper (included in GS-15)
- Inserts made from newsprint (included in GS-15)
- Miscellaneous published material made from newsprint (e.g., flyers) (included in GS-15)
- Specialty paper such as thermal or carbon paper
- Packaging materials