



# Environmental Labelling Explained!

Environmental labels can help consumers spot products that are less damaging to the environment. However, it is not always obvious what these labels mean. Below are the meanings of some of environmental labels commonly found on products within the UK.



**The Mobius Loop** - An internationally recognised recycling symbol which can mean that a product is either recyclable or has some recycled content. Unless the product states the percentage of recycled content, the symbol usually means that the product can be recycled where facilities are available. If a percentage figure is included it shows the percentage of recycled material that has been used to make the product. Each arrow represents an aspect of a successful recycling programme: collection, remanufacturing/reprocessing into a new product, and finally purchase by the consumer. This is not an accreditation symbol, so anyone can use it whether the material is recycled or not.

**Plastics** - These logos show what type of plastic a product is made from. It is normally necessary to separate plastics into types for recycling.



Polyethylene Terephthalate

High Density Polyethylene

PVC

Low Density Polyethylene

Polypropylene

Polystyrene

All other resins and multi-materials

A supplier operating an environmental management system may seek certification to **ISO 14001**. This standard specifies the requirements for an environmental management system in terms of an organisation's environmental commitment to a policy, compliance with applicable legislation and regulations and to continual improvement in its overall performance.

## ISO 14001

For more information see: <http://www.iso14000-iso14001-environmental-management.com/>



**The Energy Efficiency logo** has been introduced by the Energy Savings Trust, an independent government funded body, to identify products and services, which save or use less energy. This label is used to promote energy saving appliances.

For more information see: [www.saveenergy.co.uk](http://www.saveenergy.co.uk)



**The European Eco-label** - This scheme was launched to avoid proliferation of separate national schemes. Award of the label signals that the item meets 'rigorous environmental criteria and proper fitness of use', but it does not necessarily mean that a product contains any recycled content. Products featuring the Eco-label should become more widespread as manufacturers apply to be allowed to use the label on products that comply with the appropriate criteria, which are based on detailed life cycle analysis

For more information see: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/ecolabel/>



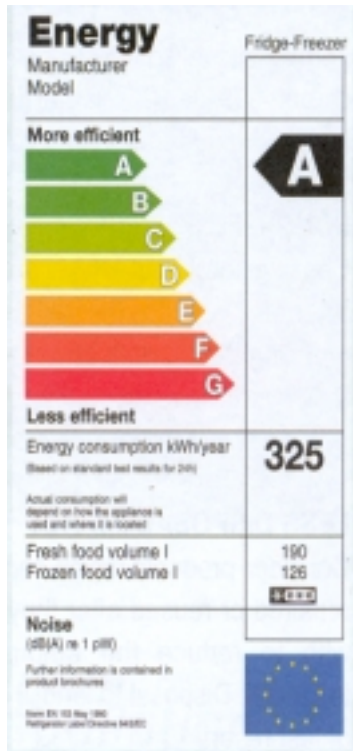
**The Forest Stewardship Council** evaluates, accredits and monitors certification organisations, which inspect forest operations and grant labels certifying that timber has been produced from well-managed forests. Once certified, timber and timber-based products originating from that forest or woodland are eligible to carry the FSC Trademark.

For additional information, check out their Web site: <http://www.fscoax.org/>



**EPA Energy Star** – The Energy Star logo means that the energy consumption of an appliance is below an agreed level in stand-by mode. The Energy Star® Office Equipment Program is a self-certification program dedicated to reducing energy consumption. It was developed in 1992 by the US Environmental Protection Agency to reduce energy wasted during idle periods by personal computers, printers, fax machines, copiers and scanners. Machines with this logo should power down after a period of not being used, and then power up when used again.

For more information see: <http://www.energystar.gov/>



By law, the **EC Energy Label** must be displayed on all white goods such as fridges, freezers and washing machines. The label also provides an assessment of the product's energy efficiency, as well as giving an estimate of electricity and water consumption on standard settings, performance, noise levels and whether the product has gained an ecolabel. The label identifies the most energy efficient models on a scale of A-G, A being the most efficient.

For more information see [www.mtprog.com](http://www.mtprog.com)



**The Soil Association Organic Symbol** is the UK's most recognisable trademark for organic produce. When used on food packaging, it tells the consumer that product is certified to the highest organic standards and provides reassurance of organic authenticity. Farmers, growers, processors and retailers value the Organic Symbol as it embodies high professional standards of production, handling, storage and sale.

More information: [www.soilassociation.org/](http://www.soilassociation.org/)



**NAPM Recycled Mark** - This mark is awarded to those papers which contain a minimum of 75% genuine waste. Genuine waste is defined as: Converters' waste - paper, which has left the mill and has become waste during a converting process such as cutting or slitting to meet a specific commercial order. Printers' waste - printed or unprinted waste collected from a printing operation (trimmings, overs or rejects). Domestic or Office waste - collected from homes and offices, printed or unprinted.

For more information see <http://www.napm.org.uk>



The **Fair Trade Federation (FTF)** is an association of fair trade wholesalers, retailers, and producers whose members are committed to providing fair wages and good employment opportunities to economically disadvantaged artisans and farmers worldwide. FTF also acts as a clearinghouse for information on fair trade and provides resources and networking opportunities for its members. By adhering to social criteria and environmental principles, Fair Trade Organisations (FTOs) foster a more equitable and sustainable system of production and trade that benefits

people and their communities.

More information: <http://www.fairtradefederation.com/>



**The Blue Angel** - This scheme is administered by the German Quality Control Institute, and has been established since 1979. It covers a wide range of consumer products from wallpaper to tyres. Currently, over 4,000 products from various manufacturers carry this widely recognised label. For recycled paper to qualify for the mark, it must be made of 100% waste paper (tolerance 5%), and contain at least 51% low grade or medium grade scrap and wastes.

For more information see: <http://www.blauer-engel.de>