

1.9 Ecology and the Textile Pipeline (3)

Eco-labelling

There is a demand from some consumer groups that textile labels should give information about any potentially harmful substances which may be contained in the product. In various countries, governmental or private organisations have developed sets of criteria which can be embodied in a labelling scheme to satisfy these demands. Typically, such labels guarantee that:

- no potentially carcinogenic dyestuffs have been used
- heavy metals are present in such small quantities that their concentration, when dissolved in perspiration, would be lower than the permitted levels for drinking water
- pesticides are present in concentrations lower than those permitted for foodstuffs
- formaldehyde shall not exceed a certain concentration
- the pH value is neutral or slightly acid (like human skin)
- textiles intended for babies and small children shall not release any dyestuff on contact with saliva.

Manufacturers or distributors of textile products can apply to these organisations for the right to use promotional and marketing materials (labels, hang tags etc.) subject to their products being included in a stringent testing regime.

Label	Requirements	Label	Requirements
	<p>Eco-Tex Standard 100 is a label of the Hohenstein Test Institute, in Germany. It guarantees that the concentrations of potentially harmful chemicals shall not be greater than certain published values. Random samples are submitted to laboratory testing in one of a number of associated institutes.</p>		<p>GREEN-COTTON is a trademark of a Danish textile company specialising in environmentally friendly and socially responsible production. The cotton is either certified "organic" or "sustainable". It is hand-picked and contains no pesticide residues. The latest technology is used at all stages of manufacture to minimise environmental impacts.</p>
	<p>The Eco-Tex Standard 1000 guarantees that the whole manufacturing chain, including working conditions, effluent disposal, environmental management, storage and transportation, all meet certain social and ecological standards.</p>		<p>NATURTEXTIL is a label of a German industry association. It embodies strict ecological and social requirements throughout the manufacturing chain. Only natural fibres or animal products that have been produced under strictly organic regimes are allowed. Organic certification is required at all stages.</p>
	<p>The Eco-Tex Standard 100 plus label guarantees that all products and operations of a given manufacturer, conform to the requirements of both the Eco-Tex 100 and 1000 standards.</p>		<p>MEDICALLY TESTED is a designation devised by a German research institute, based on a specific series of laboratory tests based on challenging human cells with an extract from the textile to give an assessment of "skin tolerance".</p>
	<p>Ecolog is a trademark of a German company that specialises in weatherproof clothing. They have developed garments in which every component – fabrics, linings, membranes, zippers, padding, buttons – is made from pure polyester. This means that at the end of its life, the garment can be reduced to polyester chips for re-use, e.g. in bottles.</p>		<p>The EU Flower is a symbol created and supported by the European Union. Any manufacturer may apply to use the symbol to identify products that comply with strict ecological and performance criteria. The label is overseen, and the products are tested, by independent organisations such as Ecolabelling Denmark.</p>