

Guidance on 'CFC Free' and other environmental claims and statements on Aerosols



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Introduction

Who should read this guidance?

All companies that develop, manufacture or retail aerosols or aerosol products and are:

- Currently making environmental claims about products;
- Considering how to market the environmental attributes of their products;
- Receiving queries from customers about the environmental performance of their products and are considering how to respond.

Giving clear, straightforward, environmental information, as outlined in this guidance, has benefits for consumers and business alike. By providing information about the environmental effects and qualities of products, and how to use and dispose of them, environmental claims (sometimes called "green" claims) help consumers to make informed buying choices. They also help to raise awareness of the issues, enhance consumer understanding and improve product standards overall. At the same time businesses can also enhance their credentials and demonstrate that they are acting responsibly both to consumers, other business partners and regulators.

This document is official government and industry guidance, which has been developed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), with the British Aerosol Manufacturers' Association (BAMA). It aims to provide clear, user-friendly advice for companies in the aerosols sector, who wish to make environmental claims about their products. It covers the following areas:

- **Claims relating to CFCs**
- **Claims relating to Recycling**
- **Other Environmental Claims and Statements on Aerosols**

Claims relating to CFCs

The sale of aerosols containing CFCs is now prohibited in the UK. Given this legislative requirement, BAMA, Defra and the DTI recommend that companies do not make claims such as:

- 'CFC free'
- 'this aerosol contains no CFCs'

Such claims could be misleading to consumers because they imply that the product is in some way exceptional, and are therefore in breach of the *UK Green Claims Code*¹.

(1) <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/gcc/pdf/gcc.pdf>

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However, whilst consumer concern over CFCs in aerosols still exists, BAMA, Defra and the DTI agree that companies that wish to make a claim on this issue should use the phrase:

- 'Aerosols do not contain CFCs.'

This wording has the advantage of providing information on the whole industry, not just the aerosol on which it appears, but it is anticipated that this claim will also ultimately become redundant.

Claims related to Recycling

Health and safety studies from around the world show that empty aerosols may be safely included with other metal packaging material in recycling schemes. In accordance with ISO 14021, statements concerning recycling of aerosols should only be made where the aerosol will be sold into a market in which it is known that the recycling infrastructure exists. Currently in the UK about 50% of local authorities explicitly accept aerosols in their recycling schemes. Therefore, the following statement on recycling may be used to inform consumers of the suitability of the empty aerosol for recycling and to encourage this practice:

- 'Please recycle – when empty.'

Other Environmental Claims and Statements on Aerosols

If you would like to make an environmental claim not covered by one of the above areas, you may find it useful to refer to more general advice produced by the Government – *Green Claims – Practical Guidance* available online at; <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/consumerprod/index.htm>.

By following this guidance, companies can ensure that claims are meaningful and in line with existing standards and codes, namely the UK Green Claims Code, the international standard ISO 14021 and European Commission Guidelines for Making and Assessing Environmental Claims². The Defra guidance is not intended to replace these standards and codes but to provide user-friendly interpretative guidance on how to apply them.

(2) http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/consumers/cons_safe/news/green/guidelines_en.pdf

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