

The Blue Angel for shampoos, shower gels, soaps and other so-called “rinse off” cosmetic products (DE-UZ 203)



Information for manufacturers and the retail trade

www.blauer-engel.de/en/uz203

Low impact on bodies of water

- Requirements for renewable raw materials
- Limits on packaging waste

Reliable guidance for sustainable purchasing

The Blue Angel – the environmental label from the German federal government – has set stringent standards for environmentally friendly, healthy and durable products and services in an independent and credible way since 1978. The Blue Angel is Germany’s most well-known environmental label. You can thus benefit from the clear competitive advantages and added level of trust that this environmental label enjoys in the economy and amongst consumers. The label’s credibility and competence, its objective criteria, its institutionalised award process and its governmental links increase your corporate and brand value.

The advantages offered by the Blue Angel

The Blue Angel allows you as a company to present your environmental management practices and product responsibility in a credible way and set yourself apart from your competitors. Furthermore, you can use the Blue Angel for cosmetic products to demonstrate to customers that you

- reduce the pollution of waste water and bodies of water by e.g. largely avoiding the use of not readily biodegradable ingredients and reducing the toxicity of the product to water organisms to a minimum,
- use renewable raw materials in surfactants that have been cultivated under sustainable conditions or which support sustainable cultivation,
- reduce packaging and thus waste to a minimum and simplify the recycling of the packaging.



© Chesna/pixabay

Environmentally friendly cosmetic products

The Blue Angel can be awarded to rinse-off cosmetic products for private and/or commercial use. This includes shampoos (solid/liquid), conditioners, shower gels, soaps (solid, liquid, paste) and shaving foams, gels, creams and soaps.

Protecting water with a good fitness for use

Around 790,000 tonnes of cosmetic products are produced every year in Germany*. They can contain substances that are not readily biodegradable, are damaging to water organisms or accumulate in the environment or organisms. These substances can find their way into bodies of water via the waste water system. The Blue Angel helps to avoid the use of these environmentally damaging substances as far as possible and ensures that the products have the least possible impact on the environment and human health during their use and disposal. To ensure that the quality of the products does not suffer as a result, the Blue Angel also requires that the product's fitness for use is verified by an independent test.

*Source: *Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry*, Vol. 28, No. 12, pp. 2485–2489, 2009

Criteria: What does the Blue Angel for cosmetic materials take into consideration?

- **Use of renewable raw materials**
 - » Surfactants must be primarily produced from renewable raw materials, meaning that the proportion of renewable carbon in the total carbon in the surfactant system must be 70%.
 - » If raw materials produced from palm oil (kernel) are used, the sustainable cultivation of the oil plants on certified plantations must be verified.
- **Requirements for the biodegradability of the ingredients**
 - » Surfactants must be readily biodegradable under both aerobic conditions and anaerobic conditions.
 - » There are special requirements for the biodegradability of synthetic polymers.
 - » Only a limited amount of not readily biodegradable substances may be used.
- **Limiting toxicity to aquatic organisms.**
- **Avoidance of substances that are damaging to health and the environment e.g. via**
 - » Exclusion of hazardous substances above and beyond current legal requirements.
 - » Strict requirements for preservatives, colouring agents and fragrances.
 - » Exclusion of microplastics.
- **Requirements for the packaging**
 - » Limiting the weight of the packaging based on the amount of product and
 - » Requirements for good recyclability.
 - » The design should enable economical dosing and complete emptying of the packaging.

Compliance verifications

Compliance with all requirements must be verified in accordance with the Basic Award Criteria – e.g. in the form of test reports, approved certificates or legally binding manufacturer declarations.

Application, use of the environmental label and costs

RAL gGmbH is responsible for handling the applications and concluding the contracts (E-mail: umweltzeichen@ral.de, Service hotline: +49 228 68895-190). RAL gGmbH, the awarding body of the eco-label, charges a one-off processing fee for the application and a annual fee depends on the annual sales of the certified product. The annual fee depends on the annual sales of the certified product. Further information is available at <https://www.blauer-engel.de/en/companies/costs-blue-angel-schedule-fees>.

September 2024

Further information: www.blauer-engel.de/en



Federal Ministry
for the Environment, Nature Conservation,
Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection

