



Eco Angel Blue Angel

Guide to buying graphic paper

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in cooperation with the Federal Environmental Agency (Umweltbundesamt), the Environmental Label Jury (Jury Umweltzeichen) and the Federation of German Consumer Organisations (Verbraucherzentrale Bundesverband)

Blue Angel, FSC, EU Flower – the number of national and international eco-labels and sustainability seals for paper products is growing. However, as the criteria for such labels become more complex, consumers become increasingly uncertain.

A comparison of the criteria demonstrates: the Blue Angel sets the strictest standards and is in this way a reliable guidepost in the search for environmentally friendly paper products that fulfil the highest ecological demands.



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Amt
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Views on eco-labels

Jürgen Trittin, Federal Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety:

"When it comes to ecolabels, consumers do sometimes not see the wood for the trees. There are simply too many labels. But actually it is really easy. Regarding recycling paper the Blue Angel is by far the most environmentally friendly choice."

Gerd Billen, Chairman of the Environmental Label Jury:

"The best way for consumers to help conserve virgin forests is to use recycled paper with the Blue Angel label."

Edda Müller, Chairman of the Federation of German Consumer Organisations:

"When buying recycled paper, consumers expect transparent and credible product information - that is exactly what the Blue Angel stands for."

Franz Winterer, Spokesman of the Initiative Pro Recyclingpapier

"Recycled paper with the Blue Angel label is and will remain the first choice."

Why you should look for the Blue Angel label when you buy paper

Five good reasons

1. Recycling paper with the Blue Angel label conserves forests and valuable resources



The Federal Environmental Agency's eco-balance of graphic paper confirmed: compared to virgin fiber the use of recycled paper not only relieves the burden on precious natural resources, but also considerably less water, chemicals and energy are used and fewer emissions are generated in its production.

2. Blue Angel recycled paper protects health



Blue Angel guarantees that no poisonous chemicals or additives are used in the production of a paper.

3. Blue Angel recycled paper meets important technical specifications



Recycled paper with the Blue Angel label not only meets the strictest environmental standards. It also fulfils the technical requirements for use in modern office equipment and in archiving.

4. The specifications of Blue Angel recycled paper are always up to date



The standards for the awarding of the Blue Angel label are regularly updated according to the latest scientific findings and technological developments. The next revision of the standards has already been adopted and implementation will begin 1 January 2006 at the latest.

5. You can rely on the Blue Angel



The criteria for the Blue Angel label are agreed by an independent jury made up of representatives of environmental and consumer organisations, trade unions, industry, commerce, trade, municipalities, science, the media, churches and the federal states. Compliance with fundamental standards is certified by independent auditors.

For further information on eco-labels for paper products:

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Name	Blue Angel	"The Flower"	FSC
Founded	1977	1992	1993
Competence	Environmental Label Jury, BMU, UBA, RAL	European Commission	Forest Stewardship Council
Geographical scope	Germany	EU Member States	worldwide
Label	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recycled paper (RAL-UZ 14) Recycled cartons (RAL-UZ 56) Printing and news-paper (RAL-UZ 72) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copier paper and graphic paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FSC-pure FSC-mixed FSC-recycled (since 2004)
Website	www.blauer-engel.de	www.europa.eu.int/ecolabel	www.fsc.org

An overview of the most well known labels for graphic paper

The Blue Angel

For 27 years the Blue Angel has been a trendsetter in establishing standards for environmental conservation and sustainability for a wide range of products in Germany and beyond.

The Blue Angel label for recycled paper (RAL-UZ 14) requires the use of 100% recovered paper. This means:

- low use of water and energy in production;
- preservation of forests;
- promotion of recycling management.

In addition, recycled paper with the Blue Angel label must fulfil stringent standards in terms of

- the selection of the type of recovered paper
- protection of the environmental and health through the avoidance of questionable chemicals and additives
- the quality of the paper (for example, for use in copy machines and suitability for archiving)

Result: With its rigorous rules regarding raw materials and the use of chemicals as well as consideration of health and quality standards, the Blue Angel is a reliable guidepost for environmentally friendly paper products.



EU Eco-label

The EU eco-label does not have any requirements regarding the use of recovered paper.

The central elements of the EU eco-label are:

- Limitations on emissions (waste water, air) and use of energy in production
- Environmental and health protection through restrictions on the use of chemicals and additives.

Result: The EU eco-label has extensive criteria for the production process, but it does not promote paper recycling.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)

The FSC lobbies for ecologically and socially responsible use of forests. For this reason, the FSC does not claim to award a comprehensive eco-label. Instead it focuses exclusively on the origin of the pulp. Consequently, in contrast to the Blue Angel and EU eco-label, important criteria such as the use of chemicals are not considered.

Compliance with globally applicable FSC standards establishes the framework for awarding of the FSC label. The central elements are:

- Preservation of biodiversity and the integrity of managed forests
- Ensuring of the rights of indigenous peoples
- Protection of employment rights in forest management

Result: The relevance of the FSC for environmentally friendly paper products is limited.

A comparison shows:

The Blue Angel label is commendable

Decisive in the selection of a paper product with the highest ecological value, e.g., the least environmental impact, is the individual environmental profile. A comparison of the criteria confirms: the Blue Angel label guarantees compliance with the highest standards.

Share of recovered paper	100%*	not defined	100%	0% (no recovered paper allowed)
Certified forest management	no wood	at least 10%	no wood	100%
Chlorine-free	yes	yes	not defined	not defined
Limitations of harmful chemicals	yes	yes	no	no
Ban on certain chemicals	yes	yes	no	no
Elimination of certain chemicals	yes	no	no	no
Limitations on VOC/SVOC Emissions in copier paper	yes (binding from 01.01.2006)	no	no	no
Limitations on use of energy	no, but ensured through recycling	yes	no, but ensured through recycling	no
Limitations on use of water	no, but ensured through recycling	no	no, but ensured through recycling	no
Determination of useful properties	yes	yes	no	no
Proven by	Auditors and producer declarations	Supplier, producer and own declarations	external certification	external certification

*Exception UZ 72: at least 72%