

## **Green Seal Certifications Must Include Statement Limiting Claims: FTC**

To avoid being deceptive, green seal certifications need to prominently state what makes the product green, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) warned.

The FTC sent letters to five providers of environmental certification seals and 32 businesses warning them that their seals could be deceptive and may not comply with the FTC's environmental marketing guidelines. The recipients of the letters were not disclosed.

In disclosing that the letters were sent, the FTC said the certifications matter to people who want to shop green. "But if the seals' claims are broader than the products' benefits, they can deceive people. We are holding companies accountable for their green claims."

Here's an example offered by the FTC:



The FTC said consumers cannot reasonably confirm that a product is made from recycled materials when those materials look and perform the same as new materials. "Environmental certification seals help address this problem by assuring consumers that they are actually getting the environmental benefit they want to buy."

In the letters, the FTC told the recipients that they "may prevent deception by accompanying the seal with 'clear and prominent qualifying language that clearly conveys that the certification or seal refers only to specific and limited benefits.'"

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