



Summary Version of the Austrian Ecolabel Criteria

UZ 65, 1 July 2014

Shoes

The guideline for shoes follows a holistic approach from the origin of the source materials to finishing. Aside from environmental and health criteria, it also includes social criteria and product quality. As a result, based on the Austrian Ecolabel, consumers can identify shoes produced in a socially and environmentally compatible way at a glance.

By obtaining certification according to the Austrian Ecolabel, producers and merchants can, aside from the excellent reputation, obtain other government eco-marks more easily (e.g. Blauer Engel or EU Ecolabel). The certification of entire collections produced in a similar manner and with similar materials is promoted.

Shoes with a fixed outer sole and uppers made of leather, textiles and/or synthetic materials can qualify for certification with the ecolabel. Electric and electronic components and the use of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) are not permissible.

Requirements in terms of origin: The rawhides and skins come from farm animals; wild or threatened animal species are explicitly excluded.

If wood is used, incl. cork or natural rubber or man-made cellulose fibres, these must be sourced from sustainable timber resources.

Natural textile fibres (e.g. cotton, hemp, linen, wool) that make up more than 3 % of the final product originate from controlled organic production or are made of fibres from the conversion phase.

Requirements in terms of manufacturing: There are defined criteria in place for waste water treatment in leather and rubber production and in textile finishing. With regard to tanning, there are additional limit values in place with regard to water use. In textile finishing, exhaust air emissions are regulated as well. Environmental pollution should not be "exported" - factories located in countries outside of the EU must also comply with European standards.

Chromium (III), if improperly used during the tanning of leather, can be converted into toxic chromium (VI) that can cause skin allergies or even cancer. Toxic chromium (VI) can also be formed when chromium-tanned shoes are disposed of in waste incineration plants. Significant amounts of chromium (VI) were found in 10 – 20% of the samples analysed in current leather product tests. Therefore, for reasons of preventive environmental and health protection, only vegetable-tanned and synthetically tanned leather is permitted in eco-labelled products.

Other substances that pose health and environmental risks are barred. For the safety of consumers, tests are carried out on the end product.

Requirements in terms of working conditions: The social criteria are based on compliance with the Jo-In Code and evidence thereof must be provided for the most labour-intensive steps (sewing the shoes and gluing the soles). The JO-IN Code goes beyond the ILO core labour standards, also assessing safety at work or whether wages are sufficient to live on.

Compliance is attested by membership in the Fair Wear Foundation or Ethical Trading Initiative or by a company's or product's GOTS certification or successful audit according to SA 8000.

Product quality: Suitability for use is evaluated on the basis of durability and an odour test.

The Austrian Ecolabel Criteria for Shoes is for the most part based on the Blue Angel criteria (RAL UZ 155). The social conditions for employees in production were substantially modified and that only vegetable or synthetic tanning is permitted.

You can find ecolabel products online at

<http://www.umweltzeichen.at/produkte>

For further information, please contact one of the ecolabel addresses below:

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