



US Composting Council[®]

Model Principles for Labeling Compostable Products

- 1 Compostability should be defined by current third-party ASTM standard specifications such as D6400 and D6868, or by a product being 100% wood or fiber based. The following principles should apply to all items defined as "compostable" regardless of material type (i.e., should not just call out "plastic"). Field test disintegration verification may be encouraged in addition to ASTM standard requirements.
- 2 Claims of compostability should be limited to products that are certified "compostable" by an approved third-party certifying organization. Third party certifiers may include criteria in addition to relevant ASTM standards.
- 3 Claims of compostability should be limited to products that are designed to touch, contain or carry a food product, scraps, or other organic materials such as yard trimmings that can be collected for composting and are accepted by composters.
- 4 Regulations should prohibit misleading terms like "biodegradable" from being used on products and packaging. Example Bill Language:

"Except as specified in this regulation, a person shall not sell a product that is labeled with the term "biodegradable," "degradable," or "decomposable," or any form of those terms, or in any way imply that the product will break down, fragment, biodegrade, or decompose in a landfill or other environment."

- 5 Labeling and identification regulations should drive ease of identification for consumers and composters by requiring:
 - a) for compostable pre-checkout (i.e. produce, bulk grocery), checkout (given or taken at the point-of-sale for carry out), and compost collection bags:
 - the word "compostable,"
 - a third-party certification mark, and
 - be green, brown, or beige color or tint.

Note: this does not require such bags to be provided or preferred, only that such bags are labeled clearly.

b) for compostable utensils:

- the word "compostable"
- a third-party certification mark and
- be green, brown, or beige color or tint. To reduce contamination, local laws should require all single-use utensils provided or sold to be certified compostable.

c) for compostable straws, and stirrers:

- be green, brown, or beige color or tint. To reduce contamination, local laws should require all single-use straws provided or sold to be certified compostable

d) for compostable food service products, including: containers, plates, bowls, cups, lids, beverage containers, meat trays, deli rounds, sachets, condiment packets, clamshells and other hinged or lidded containers, and portion cup:

- the word "compostable,"
- a third-party certification mark, and
- at least partial use of green, brown, or beige color, tint, or quarter inch wide stripe. A stripe need not encircle the entire product, but it should be viewable from multiple angles.

e) for compostable food contact film:

- the word "compostable,"
- a third-party certification mark, or
- at least partial use of green, brown, or beige color, tint, or quarter inch wide stripe. A stripe need not encircle the entire product, but it should be viewable from multiple angles.

6 Non-compostable products must be prohibited from using similar labeling schemes, including the use of green, brown, or beige material coloring, tinting, or striping. The use of any other color schemes shall be allowed, as shall trademarked logos that are green, brown, or beige, so long as the entire product is not colored or tinted green, brown, or beige, or use a quarter-inch wide stripe of green, brown, or beige.

7 Labeling and identification regulations should reference existing industry standards for labeling and identification and should consider the requirements of other states and stakeholder input to maximize consistency where possible. New regulations should provide dedicated educational outreach and materials to accompany changes and should include specific enforcement provisions to be carried out by the appropriate agency or enforcement body.

8 Soil biodegradation claims shall be restricted to agricultural products, as opposed to compostability claims on consumer products, and should be defined as items meeting a current approved standard specification such as EN 17033 for soil biodegradable mulch film.

- 9 Marine biodegradation claims must be restricted to items used in the marine environment where some degree of loss is likely (e.g., fishing nets, buoys, etc.), as opposed to any other consumer products. Similarly, soil biodegradation claims must be restricted to items used in specific soil applications where loss cannot be avoided (e.g., agricultural mulch films).
- 10 Certified compostable plastic products shall be exempt from resin identification code requirements, including use of "chasing arrows" in the shape of a triangle, a solid triangle, and the number "7." Compostability is not dictated by resin type, and exemption from resin identification code requirements will help with consumer confusion.

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