

The Blue Angel for environmentally friendly leather (DE-UZ 148)



Information for manufacturers and the retail trade

www.blauer-engel.de/en/uz148

- low emissions
- low level of harmful materials
- environmentally friendly production

Reliable guidance for sustainable purchasing

The Blue Angel – the environmental label of 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 demonstrate to manufacturers of upholstered furniture or other leather processing companies, that you

- minimise the burden on the environment and people's health during the production process and the entire service life of the product right through to recycling and disposal,
- reduce the pollutants that could place a significant burden on health and the environment and which are generally associated with the tanning process and preservation of the leather to the technically required minimum,
- produce low-emission leather,
- can trace the origin of raw hides and skins sourced from agricultural animals and observe social standards in the production of the leather.



© optimarc / shutterstock

Environmentally friendly leather

The Blue Angel for leather certifies leather according to DIN EN 15987.

High environmental standards in production, tested for pollutants and low in emissions

A hide or skin has to pass through around 40 processing stages until the organic raw material has been processed into the natural product leather. The processing of leather involves the use of numerous chemicals that might have an impact on the environment and health. Substances are emitted into water, air and soil in the production process. Leather is usually a by-product of meat production. Tanning using chromium (III) salts is the most widely used form of tanning. From a health perspective, the presence of chromium (VI) compounds is problematic due to their powerful allergenic effects. Therefore, chromium (VI) should not be detectable in leather goods. Other chemicals that are still required to some extent in the leather industry, such as preservatives, and can thus not be completely excluded from the production process are also problematic.

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

- Raw hides and skins must be sourced from agricultural animals that are primarily kept for milk and/or meat production. Endangered species are expressly prohibited. In the case of non-European raw hides and skins (e.g. wet blue), a traceability in the sense of Protocol 6.5 from the Leather Working Group of at least 50% must be observed
- Limited water consumption in the production process, as well as stringent requirements placed on wastewater treatment
- Exclusion of hazardous materials in the leather such as carcinogenic substances or substances with long-lasting negative effects on water
- Strict limits for preservatives for the protection of consumers (with repetition tests every six months)
- Chromium (IV) must not be detectable in the leather (with repetition tests every six months)
- Emissions and odour tests, with repetition tests every two years
- Limits for extractable heavy metals
- Exclusion of organotin compounds, azo dyes, chloralkanes, PFC, APEO and flame retardants
- Compliance with the Code of Conduct of the Leather Industry

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 (contact: Dr. Peter Buttner, E-mail: peter.buttner@ral.de, Tel.: 0228 - 688 95-148). Use of the environmental label is limited to the period of validity of the Basic Award Criteria. The current Basic Award Criteria are valid until 31/12/2023. RAL gGmbH – the awarding body for the environmental label – will charge a one-off handling fee of 400 Euro for the application. The annual fee is based on the annual sales of the certified product. If the sales figures are, for example, between 1 and 2.5 million Euro, the annual fee will be 1,300 Euro. Further information is available at <https://www.blauer-engel.de/contribution-scheme>.

April 2019

More Information: www.blauer-engel.de/en

