

**The German Ecolabel**

**BLUE ANGEL**



**Environmentally Acceptable Pipe Cleaners**

**DE-UZ 24**

**Basic Award Criteria**  
**Edition January 2024**  
**Version 1**

## The Environmental Label is supported by the following four institutions:



Federal Ministry  
for the Environment, Climate Action,  
Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety

The Federal Ministry for the Environment is the owner of the label, defines the fundamental guidelines for the award of the Blue Angel ecolabel and appoints the Environmental Label Jury.



The German Environment Agency with its specialist department for "Ecodesign, Eco-Labeling and Environmentally friendly Procurement" acts as the office of the Blue Angel ecolabel. It develops the technical criteria including the required compliance verifications in cooperation with relevant interest groups.



The Environmental Label Jury is the independent, decision-making body for the Blue Angel and includes representatives from environmental and consumer associations, trade unions, industry, the trade, crafts, local authorities, academia, churches, young people and the German federal states.



RAL gGmbH is the awarding body for the environmental label. It examines the applications submitted by companies for the use of the Blue Angel ecolabel and concludes the "Contracts on the Use of the Environmental Label". It also monitors correct use of the ecolabel.

Please use the following format when adding citations:

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**This document is a translation of a German original. In case of dispute, the original document should be taken as authoritative.**

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Preface

In cooperation with the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection, the German Environmental Agency and considering the results of the expert hearings conducted by RAL gGmbH, the Environmental Label Jury has set up these Basic Criteria for the Award of the Environmental Label. RAL gGmbH has been tasked with awarding the Environmental Label.

Upon application to RAL gGmbH and on the basis of a Contract on the Use of the Environmental Label to be concluded with RAL gGmbH, the permission to use the Environmental Label may be granted to all products, provided that they comply with the requirements as specified hereinafter.

The product must comply with all the legal requirements in the country in which it is to be marketed. The applicant shall declare that the product meets this requirement.

## 1.2 Background

Chemical pipe cleaners mainly consist of strong alkalis such as sodium or potassium hydroxide and salts such as sodium nitrate and sodium hypochlorite. These substances contribute to the salinization of water bodies. Furthermore, they can cause chlorinated hydrocarbons to form in waste water and water bodies. It is also possible for irritant gases that are harmful to health to form if the pipe cleaning agents come into contact with acidic sanitary cleaners.

Mechanical pipe cleaners (cleaning coils or spirals, plungers, etc.) help to replace the use of chemical pipe cleaners.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Environmental Label

Therefore, following benefits for the environment and health are stated in the explanatory box:



# 2 Scope

These Basic Award Criteria apply to non-chemical pipe cleaners (also known as non-chemical drain cleaners) that are designed as household appliances, e.g. pipe cleaning coils or spirals, other mechanical pipe cleaning devices and similar devices. The Basic Award Criteria also apply to products designed for use in a domestic setting.

Products designed for commercial use are excluded from the scope of these Basic Award Criteria. Electric or battery-powered products/devices are also excluded from the scope of these Basic Award Criteria.

### 3 Requirements

The Environmental Label illustrated on the first page may be used for labelling pipe cleaners that comply with the following requirements:

#### 3.1 General requirements for the pipe cleaners

- The pipe cleaner must be able to remove blockages in pipes or drains without the use of any chemical additives.
- The design and handling of the pipe cleaner must comply with all applicable regulations and technical rules.
- The pipe cleaners must be fit for use.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirements in Paragraph 3.1 and submit the user instructions.*

#### 3.2 Requirements for wood

If the pipe cleaner is partly made of wood (e.g. a wooden handle with a suction cup), the processed wood must have been sourced from legally managed forests. In addition, at least 70% of the wood must be from certified sources (FSC or PEFC standard) so that the applicant can prove that the wood was sourced from forests that can verify that they have been managed according to the guidelines for sustainable forestry.

#### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall provide information on the origins of the wood used in the products in Annex 1 and verify the legality of the wood sources in accordance with the European Timber Regulation (EU/995/2010).*

*The applicant shall state a valid certification number from the raw material supplier (FSC Mix, FSC 100% or PEFC) and submit an example delivery note that includes a corresponding statement on the certification of the wood.*

#### 3.3 Requirements for the plastic housing, handles and suction cups

If the pipe cleaner has a plastic housing, plastic handle or a suction cup, these components must not contain any substances with a concentration > 0.1% by mass that are identified as being particularly alarming under the European Chemicals Regulation REACH (1907/2006/EC) and which have been incorporated into the list drawn up in accordance with Article 59, Paragraph 1 of the REACH Regulation (so-called "list of candidates").<sup>1,2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The list of candidates in its currently valid version can be found at: <https://echa.europa.eu/de/regulations/reach/candidate-list-substances-in-articles>

<sup>2</sup> The provision of this information is based on the obligations to provide information according to REACH Art. 33 (2) and refers here to the partial components stated above. Further information can be found here: [REACH obligations to provide information to consumers | German Environment Agency](#)

### **Compliance verification**

*The applicant shall declare compliance with the requirements at the time of application and declare that he/she will regularly examine the REACH list of candidates to ensure continued compliance with the requirements.*

## **4 Applicants and Parties Involved**

Manufacturers or distributors of final products according to Paragraph 2 shall be eligible for application.

Parties involved in the award process are:

- RAL gGmbH to award the Blue Angel Environmental Label,
- the federal state being home to the applicant's production site,
- Umweltbundesamt (German Environmental Agency) which after the signing of the contract receives all data and documents submitted in applications for the Blue Angel in order to be able to further develop the Basic Award Criteria.

## **5 Use of the Environmental Label**

The use of the Environmental Label by the applicant is governed by a contract on the use of the Environmental Label concluded with RAL gGmbH.

Within the scope of such contract, the applicant undertakes to comply with the requirements under Paragraph 3 while using the Environmental Label.

Contracts on the Use of the Environmental Label are concluded to fix the terms for the certification of products under Paragraph 2. Such contracts shall run until December 31, 2028.

They shall be extended by periods of one year each, unless terminated in writing by March 31, 2028 or March 31 of the respective year of extension.

After the expiry of the contract, the Environmental Label may neither be used for labelling nor for advertising purposes. This regulation shall not affect products being still in the market.

The applicant (manufacturer) shall be entitled to apply to RAL gGmbH for an extension of the right to use the ecolabel on the product entitled to the label if it is to be marketed under another brand/trade name and/or other marketing organisations.

The Contract on the Use of the Environmental Label shall specify:

- Applicant (manufacturer/distributor)
- Brand/trade name, product description
- Distributor (label user), i.e. the above-mentioned marketing organisations.