Proposed Revisions to Criteria for Microbial-Based Cleaning Products

Revision Summary
In 2011, Green Seal issued criteria for microbial-based cleaning products (MBCP), which were and are becoming more widely available on the North American market. This year, Green Seal is proposing minor revisions to the criteria for MBCPs in order to recognize leadership in green chemistry, provide a wider variety of sustainable product options for buyers and end users, and remove unnecessary and burdensome requirements.

Proposed Revisions Intended Outcomes
- To allow certified MBCPs to be sold in spray packaging.
- To reduce unnecessary and burdensome labeling requirements.

The full proposed redlined criteria revisions can be found on the second page of this document.

Research Summary
MBCPs are commonly used as stain removers, odor eliminators, drain de-cloggers and for pet odor and clean-up. A majority of cleaning products on the North American household and professional markets are designed for use in spray packaging.

Verified-non-pathogenic microorganisms in cleaning products can act as safer substitutes, replacing more hazardous chemicals that may be volatile, corrosive, or harmful to fish and wildlife. Microorganisms used in these products are not classified as hazardous. Green Seal currently verifies that microorganisms as ingredients are categorized as Risk Group 1: “unlikely to cause human and animal disease” by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Due to the safety profiles of these ingredients, incidental inhalation of microorganisms via the spray of the product has comparable or lower risk to human health compared to other Green Seal certified cleaning products that are spray applied.

Based on the safety profile of microorganisms, additional labeling requirements are unnecessary for user safety. However, Green Seal maintains that ingredient transparency is a necessary feature for these products.

A full research record is available for review in the Revision Proposal.

Provide Feedback
We welcome your feedback. Green Seal’s comment period will remain open until Friday, April 9.
To submit comments or schedule a conference call, contact us:

- by email at standards@greenseal.org
- by phone at 202-872-6400.

Green Seal develops standard revisions in an open and stakeholder engaged process in accordance with international best practices to ensure standards remain relevant, a reflection of good sustainability practices, and are feasible for multiple sizes of organizations | Greenseal.org
Microbial-Based Cleaning Products (MBCP) Red-Lined Proposed Revisions

Text in the boxes below show the details of the proposed revisions. The red text shows proposed additions. The text with strikethrough lines are proposed deletions.

The following Green Seal standards with requirements for Microorganisms would be affected by the proposed revisions.

- GS-8 / GS-37 – Green Seal Standards for General Purpose Cleaners
- GS-48 / GS-51 – Green Seal Standards for Laundry Care Products
- GS-52 / GS-53 – Green Seal Standards for Specialty Cleaners

Proposed Revision: Deletion of Prohibition on Spray Packaging.
This text is included in the scope of the above standards.

This standard does not include products that contain enzymes or microorganisms that are sold in spray packaging.

Proposed Revision: Deletion of Unnecessary and Burdensome Labeling Requirements
The text below is included in the Microorganisms Annex of the above listed standards. GS-37, GS-51, and GS-53 have slight variations in deleted text - see full proposal for details.

G. Labeling Requirements. Products containing microorganisms shall include the following on the label: list “microorganisms,” or an equivalent term approved by Green Seal, on the ingredient line and the Product Safety Data Sheet. Products shall also include language on the label, website, or other marketing materials informing users that the product may not function effectively in the presence of antimicrobial agents such as chlorine bleach.

- A declaration that the product contains microorganisms
- A statement that immune-compromised individuals should avoid exposure to products containing microorganisms from both direct use and incidental contact during or shortly after application to these products, especially when the treated areas are still wet
- Contact with open cuts or sores should be avoided
- Users should wash their hands after using the product
- Instructions that microorganisms may not be effective in the presence of antimicrobial agents such as chlorine bleach
- Instructions that the product shall not be used on food-contact surfaces
- Instructions that products containing microorganisms should not be sprayed directly into the air.

The following statement can appear on the product label
- A statement that immune-compromised individuals should avoid exposure to products containing microorganisms from both direct use and incidental contact during or shortly after application to these products, especially when the treated areas are still wet

For additional details on the proposed revisions to criteria for MBCPs, please refer to the Full Proposal and Redlined Standards on Green Seal’s website.

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