



## **Final Criteria: Hand Sanitizers Sold as Wipes**

**October 30, 2020**

### **Green Seal's Health Protective Certification for Hand Sanitizers**

---

On September 10, 2020, Green Seal issued Final Criteria for Hand Sanitizers based on our existing health-protective framework in which product formulas are screened for carcinogens, mutagens, reproductive toxins, endocrine disruptors, asthmagens, and other significant chemical hazards. These criteria are now housed in two Green Seal standards: the GS-41 Standard for Hand Cleaners and Hand Sanitizers for Institutional and Industrial Use and the GS-44 Standard for Soaps, Cleansers, Hand Sanitizers, and Shower Products.

Green Seal has now expanded the scope of these criteria to cover an additional product type to help individuals, families, businesses, and governments respond to the COVID-19 pandemic: alcohol-based hand sanitizers sold as wipes.

Hand sanitizers sold as wipes are formulated similarly to gels, liquids, and other hand sanitizer products. Hand sanitizer wipes can be advantageous in certain cases and settings:

- Hand sanitizer wipes may be beneficial to help schools and daycares reduce the risk of accidental poisonings that can occur when students ingest these products in gel or liquid form.
- Wipe products may be more effective antiseptics when a user's hands are soiled.

As of October 30, 2020, hand sanitizer wipes are now covered by Green Seal's GS-41 and GS-44 standards and these products are eligible for Green Seal certification.

### **Green Seal Criteria for Hand Sanitizer Wipes**

Hand sanitizer wipes must conform to the health requirements that are set for alcohol-based gel, liquid, spray, and foam hand sanitizers. One additional requirement is set for these products: Hand sanitizers sold as wipes must be packaged with no fewer than 20 wipes per package. This requirement is intended to limit the plastic waste generated when a consumer uses the product.

Green Seal's criteria for hand sanitizer wipes does not include environmental requirements for the cloth/fabric portion of this product, e.g., the design of the material, the processing additives, or user instructions for disposal. Green Seal may consider developing environmental requirements for the cloth portion of hand sanitizer wipes at the time COVID-19 is no longer an active global health emergency.

### **Considerations for Purchasing Hand Sanitizer Wipes**

For everyday purchases of hand sanitizers, Green Seal recommends non-wipe products due to the lower environmental impact; wipe cloths are typically a petroleum-based plastic material such as polypropylene, rayon, and polyester. The extraction and manufacturing related to petroleum-based products contribute to air pollution and can release harmful greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change.

### **Our Recommendations for Developing Greener Wipes**

Green Seal's current criteria for hand sanitizers is primarily focused on the health-protective attributes of these products. For hand sanitizing wipes, Green Seal has not yet set environmental leadership requirements for the cloth portion of this product. To design a wipe for a lower environmental impact, Green Seal encourages manufacturers to adhere to the following design specifications.

- Design with agricultural fibers including agricultural residue, wood pulp, recovered paper fibers, and other cellulosic and biodegradable materials in lieu of plastic.
- Produce wipes within a chlorine-free bleaching process.
- Include high numbers (100, 200) wipes per package to limit the amount of waste produced.
- Plastic packaging of wipes should be recyclable and include clear disposal instructions.

### **Questions**

For questions on this scope expansion and Green Seal's Criteria for Hand Sanitizers, please reach out to Brie Welzer, [bwelzer@greenseal.org](mailto:bwelzer@greenseal.org)

## Scope Expansion of GS-41 and GS-44 Standards - Annex 1, Scope

---

Below are tracked changes (noted with a ~~strike through~~ for deletions, and **red text** for additions) that show the updates to both the GS-41 and GS-44 standards to accommodate that alcohol-based hand sanitizer wipes are now eligible for certification.

### GS-41 Standard, Criterion 3.11 Plastic Packaging

**3.11.2 Hand Sanitizer Wipes Per Package.** *Hand sanitizers* sold as wipes shall not be individually packaged or individually wrapped. The *primary package for hand sanitizers* sold as wipes must contain at least 20 wipes.

### GS-41 Standard, APPENDIX 1 – SCOPE (Informative)

Products excluded from GS-41

- General-purpose, restroom, glass and carpet cleaners for industrial and institutional use (included in GS-37)
- General-purpose, bathroom, glass, and carpet cleaner products marketed specifically for *household use* (included in GS-8)
- Hand cleaning products for household use (covered in GS-44)
- Hand cleaning products in food preparation operations or medical facilities.
- *Hand sanitizers* formulated with benzalkonium chloride as the active ingredient
- *Hand sanitizers* regulated as healthcare antiseptic rubs
- *Hand sanitizers* sold ~~as wipes or~~ within aerosol cans
- Shampoo, conditioner and related shower products for baby, child, adult, commercial, and professional use (GS-44)
- Personal care (GS-50)

## GS-44 Standard, Section 4.0, Packaging Requirements

**4.1.5 Hand Sanitizer Wipes Per Package.** *Hand sanitizers* sold as wipes shall not be individually packaged or individually wrapped. The *primary package* for *hand sanitizers* sold as wipes must contain at least 20 wipes.

## GS-44 Standard, APPENDIX 1 – SCOPE (Informative)

Products excluded from GS-44

- Aftershave (included in GS-50)
- Astringent/toner (included in GS-50)
- Cleaning wipes that don't require rinsing after use (included in GS-50)
- Cuticle cream, lotion, and oil (included in GS-50)
- Deodorant and antiperspirant (included in GS-50)
- Feminine deodorant
- Fragrance Products/perfume and body spray
- Hair shine products (included in GS-50)
- Hair spray (included in GS-50)
- Hair styling products (e.g., balm, gel, mousse) (included in GS-50)
- Hair dye, color, and bleach
- Hair relaxant
- *Hand sanitizers* formulated with benzalkonium chloride as the active ingredient
- *Hand sanitizers* regulated as healthcare antiseptics
- *Hand sanitizers* sold as wipes or within aerosol cans
- Insect repellents (included in GS-50)
- Leave-on hair *conditioner* (included in GS-50)
- Lip products (included in GS-50)