

Environmental Choice^M Program

CERTIFICATION CRITERIA DOCUMENT

CCD-154



Product: Funeral Caskets

Preamble

Environment Canada's Environmental Choice^M Program is pleased to publish the following national guideline on *funeral caskets*.

The Environmental Choice Program is designed to support a continuing effort to improve and/or maintain environmental quality by reducing energy and materials consumption and by minimizing the impacts of pollution generated by the production, use and disposal of goods and services available to Canadians.

It is a natural human tendency to spend considerable time, energy and resources on a loved-one's funeral. While this is quite understandable, the accumulated environmental cost is considerable, in terms of resources used, land set aside and the release of hazardous materials back into those same lands. Each year more than 320,000 litres of embalming chemicals, 150,000 tonnes of reinforced concrete, 9 tonnes of steel, and 3 million board feet of hardwoods are buried in Canadian cemeteries, derived almost entirely from resources that are used just once, for this specific purpose.

One of the primary environmental costs of funerals relates to the manufacture and subsequent disposal of caskets used for burial or cremation. Producing caskets traditionally requires the use of energy-intensive metals and/or exotic wood species, toxic glues and finishes and intensively-processed interior materials. This basic resource impact is significantly increased by its singular use, followed by burning or permanent burial (and gradual decomposition).

There is currently no environmental legislation governing the Canadian funeral industry products. Nor is there evidence of significant concern among industry players that their practices are having a detrimental effect on the environment. However, the "green burial" movement is now espousing a "natural" approach to funerals, including the use of environmentally friendly caskets. Because it avoids cremation's problematic air emissions, burial is considered the preferable option. Marketing of alternative caskets is thus seen as a progressive development in the funeral industry.

Based on a review of currently available life cycle information, the product category requirements will produce an environmental benefit through:

- a reduction in the use of non-renewable resources; and
- a reduction in toxic emissions to the environment.

Life cycle review is an ongoing process. As information and technology change, the requirements will be reviewed and possibly amended.

Environment Canada anticipates that *funeral caskets* conforming to this certification criteria document will apply to the Environmental Choice Program for verification and subsequent authority to label the qualifying services with the EcoLogo^M.

Notice

Throughout this document, any reference to a standard or guideline means to its latest edition.

The Environmental Choice Program (ECP) reserves the right to accept equivalent test data for the test methods specified in this document.

Notice of Intent

Future revisions of this Certification Criteria Document may require that bamboo used in the products' manufacture is sourced from operations that have been certified by INBAR. Similarly, it may be required that such bamboo operations take specific measures to protect panda habitats.

Interpretation

1. In this set of requirements, please note the following definitions:

“agricultural waste” means solid residues arising from the harvesting and processing of agricultural crops that might otherwise be sent to landfill and/or incinerated. Such waste may include, *inter alia*: straw, chaff, corn cobs, bean residues, and dried stalks of harvested grain;

“ASTM” means American Society for Testing and Materials;

“biodegradable” means the resin used in the manufacture of the liner meets *ASTM D6400-99: Standard Specifications for Compostable Plastics*;

“certified organic cotton” means cotton that has been certified as being grown, harvested and processed in accordance with the requirements of a recognized organic certification agency (e.g., the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) or the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA));

“CITES” means the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES Secretariat, 15, chemin des Anémones, CH_1219 Châtelaine-Genève, Suisse. Tel. (+4122) 979 9139/40, fax (+4122) 797 3417);

“EPA” means the United States Environmental Protection Agency;

“formaldehyde”, also referred to as *formalin* when in aqueous solution, means the organic compound HCHO. Generally produced from the partial oxidation of methanol (which in turn may or may not be a petrochemical derivative), it is widely used in the manufacture of polymers, including adhesives. Given that trace amounts of formaldehyde may naturally result from processes that transform wood, it should be noted that this Certification Criteria Document is intended to only prohibit synthetically-derived formaldehyde;

“FSC” means Forestry Stewardship Council, an international organization which certifies forestry operations and products against criteria that establishes the product is harvested in a way that does not damage the health of the forest or the stability and livelihoods of local communities;

“funeral casket” means a box, general made of wood or steel, specifically designed to hold a corpse for their funeral and subsequent burial or cremation. For the purposes of this Certification Criteria Document, the term “casket” includes containers bound either for burial or cremation;

“halogenated organic compounds” means any organic compound containing halogens including fluorine, chlorine, bromine and iodine;

“**INBAR**” means the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan, an international organization dedicated to improving the social, economic, and environmental benefits of bamboo and rattan. Through a global network of government, private, and not-for-profit partners, INBAR defines and implements a global agenda for sustainable bamboo and rattan production;

“**OECD**” means the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development;

“**Oeko-Tek 100**” means a European ecolabel developed to identify textiles produced with a minimum of harmful chemicals;

“**strawboard**” means a composite fibreboard manufactured from straw, a renewable agricultural by-product derived from the waste of wheat or other grain crops; and

“**volatile organic compound**” or “**VOC**” means any organic compound which participates in atmospheric photochemical reactions. It excludes those organic compounds which the ECP designates as having negligible photochemical reactivity.

Category Definition

2. This category includes all *funeral caskets* as further defined in the subcategories in this section.
 - (a) woven bamboo *funeral caskets*, and
 - (b) strawboard *funeral caskets*.

Note: Other sub-categories may be added at a later date. The ECP reserves the right to determine which sub-category will be assigned to a particular applicant.

General Requirements

3. To be authorized to carry the EcoLogo^M, the *funeral casket* must:
 - (a) meet or exceed all applicable governmental and industrial safety and performance standards; and
 - (b) be manufactured in such a manner that all steps of the process, including the disposal of waste products arising therefrom, will meet the requirements of all applicable governmental acts, by laws and regulations including, for facilities located in Canada, the *Fisheries Act* and the *Canadian Environmental Protection Act* (CEPA).

Product Specific Requirements

4. To be authorized to carry the EcoLogo^M, the **funeral casket** must:
- (a) not contain nor be manufactured with:
 - i) a metal body,
 - ii) any metal components (including, *inter alia*, hinges, fasteners, nails, handles, decorative adornments or other accessories),
 - iii) species that are listed in the **CITES** Appendices,
 - iv) rubber gaskets, or
 - v) adhesives formulated or manufactured with formaldehyde;
 - (b) contain only interior fabrics and padding that are:
 - i) made from certified organic cotton,
 - ii) not bleached with a chlorinated compound, and
 - iii) treated only with a dye(s) that meets *Oeko-Tek 100* requirements;
 - (c) if containing plastic liners, such liners must:
 - i) be biodegradable, and
 - ii) contain no halogenated polymers; and
 - (d) not have been finished with paints, varnishes, stains or other finishes that:
 - i) contain VOCs in excess of 150 g/L as determined by ASTM test method D3960 *Standard Practice for Determining Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) Content of Paints and Related Coatings*; or
 - ii) are formulated or manufactured with:
 - a) aromatic solvents,
 - b) formaldehyde,
 - c) halogenated solvents, or
 - d) mercury, lead, cadmium, hexavalent chromium or their compounds;
5. To be authorized to carry the EcoLogo, the **funeral casket** must also meet criteria specific to its subcategory.
- 5.1 **Bamboo funeral caskets** must:
- (a) be made from bamboo that is grown in accordance with sustainable harvesting principles such as *CAN/CSA-Z809-96, A Sustainable Forest Management System*, or forest harvesting programs run by the FSC or INBAR; and
 - (b) not be manufactured from bamboo species that appear in the CITES Appendices.

5.2 **Strawboard funeral caskets** must:

- (a) must be derived from agricultural waste, and not from crops dedicated exclusively as a feedstock for the strawboard.



Verification

6. To verify a claim that a product meets the criteria listed in this document, the ECP will require access, as is its normal practice, to relevant purchasing records, quality control and production records and the right of access to production facilities on an announced basis.
7. Compliance with requirement 3(b) shall be attested to by a signed statement of the Chief Executive Officer or the equivalent officer of the licensee. The ECP shall be advised in writing immediately by the licensee of any noncompliance which may occur during the term of the license. On the occurrence of any noncompliance, the license may be suspended or terminated as stipulated in the license agreement.

Conditions for EcoLogo Use

8. The EcoLogo may appear on wholesale or retail packaging, or on the product itself, provided that the product meets the requirements in this document.
9. All licensees and authorized users must comply with the ECP's *Guide to Proper Use of the EcoLogo^M* regarding the format and usage of the EcoLogo.
10. Any accompanying advertising must conform with the relevant requirements stipulated in this guideline, the license agreement and the ECP's *Guide to Proper Use of the EcoLogo^M*.
11. It is recommended that a criteria statement appear with the EcoLogo whenever the EcoLogo is used in association with the **funeral casket**. The intent of this statement is to provide clarification as to why the product was certified and to indicate constraints to which the certification is limited. This is to ensure no ambiguity over, or misrepresentation of, the reason(s) for certification.

Regardless of the applicable sub-category, the ECP suggested criteria statement wording for this product type is "*Funeral casket*". The licensee may propose other wording for the criteria statement, but any such proposed wording must be approved by the Environmental Choice Program.

	<p>For more information about the EcoLogoTM Program, please direct your inquiry to: The EcoLogoTM Program 171 Nepean Street, Suite 400 Ottawa, ON, K2P 0B4 Phone: 1.800.478.0399 www.ecologo.org</p>	
---	---	---