



The New Zealand Ecolabelling Trust

Licence Criteria for Cleaning Services

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Specification change history

Minor clarifications, corrections or technical changes made since the specification was last reviewed and issued in January 2018:

Date	Version	Change
01/06/2023	June 2023	Environmental Choice New Zealand renamed to Eco Choice Aotearoa and all references in this document amended to reflect the new name. Wording in Section 7 'Use of the Eco Choice Aotearoa Label' updated - the requirement for the label to be accompanied by the specification name is now optional.

Table of contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Background	5
3	Interpretation	6
4	Category definition	7
5	Environmental criteria	8
5.1	Legal requirements	8
5.2	Cleaning service agreements	8
5.3	Procurement and record keeping	9
5.4	Cleaning operations	10
5.5	Management systems and procedures	11
5.5.1	Environmental hazard and spill control	11
5.5.2	Staff training	11
5.6	Waste management	12
5.6.1	Waste generated by the cleaning service provider	12
5.6.2	Waste generated by the building occupants	13
5.7	Energy management	13
6	Service characteristics	14
7	Requirements and notes for licence holders	15

1 Introduction

Eco Choice Aotearoa (ECA) is an environmental labelling programme which has been created to help businesses and consumers find products and services that ease the burden on the environment. The programme results from a New Zealand Government initiative and has been established to improve the quality of the environment by minimising the adverse and maximising the beneficial environmental impacts generated by the production, distribution, use and disposal of products, and the delivery of services. The programme is managed by the New Zealand Ecolabelling Trust (the Trust).

ECA operates to the ISO 14024 standard "Environmental labels and declarations - Type I environmental labelling – Principles and procedures" and the Trust is a member of the Global Ecolabelling Network (GEN) an international network of national programmes also operating to the ISO 14024 standard.

ISO 14024 requires environmental labelling specifications to include criteria that are objective, attainable and verifiable. It requires that interested parties have an opportunity to participate and have their comments considered. It also requires that environmental criteria be set, based on an evaluation of the environmental impacts during the actual product or service life cycle, to differentiate product and services on the basis of preferable environmental performance.

The life cycle approach is used to identify and understand environmental issues (adverse or beneficial impacts) across the whole life of a product or service (within a defined product or service category). This information is evaluated to identify the most significant issues and from those to identify the issues on which it is possible to differentiate environmentally preferable products or services from others available in the New Zealand market. Criteria are then set on these significant and differentiating issues. These must be set in a form and at a level that does differentiate environmentally preferable products or services, is attainable by potential ECA licence applicants and is able to be measured and verified. As a result of this approach, criteria may not be included in an ECA specification on all aspects of the life cycle of a product or service. If stages of a product or service life cycle are found not to differentiate environmentally preferable products or services, or to have insufficient data available to allow objective benchmarking in New Zealand, those stages will not generally be included in criteria in the specification. For some issues, however, (such as energy and waste) criteria may be set to require monitoring and reporting. These criteria are designed to generate information for future reviews of specifications.

The New Zealand Ecolabelling Trust Board is pleased to publish this specification for Cleaning Services. The specification has been published to take account of substances and processes harmful to the environment, energy management and consumption of resources.

This specification sets out the requirements that cleaning services will be required to meet in order to be licensed to use the Eco Choice Aotearoa Label. The requirements include environmental criteria and service characteristics. The specification also defines the testing and other means to be used to demonstrate and verify conformance with the environmental criteria and service characteristics.

This specification has been prepared based on an overview level life cycle assessment, information from specifications for similar services from other GEN-member labelling programmes, relevant information from other Eco Choice Aotearoa specifications, information made available from cleaning companies and users of cleaning services.

This specification is valid for a period of five years. Twelve months before the expiry date (or at an earlier date if required), the Trust will initiate a further review process for the specification.

2 Background

Commercial, institutional and residential property cleaning is an essential service in New Zealand. Cleaning companies range in size from sole operators to those with over 100 staff. Effective cleaning services provide health protection and a pleasant working environment for the building users, but achieving this has environmental impacts including:

- the energy used in related transport, embodied in the cleaning products, consumables, and powered equipment, and energy consumption during cleaning process itself;
- cleaning chemicals, particularly disinfectants, can have a detrimental effect on water quality in the environment;
- cleaning chemicals can emit volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which can have a negative effect on indoor air quality and cause respiratory problems; and
- waste going to landfill.

The cleaning industry is a significant employer in New Zealand; approximately 30,000 people listed their occupation as commercial cleaners in the 2013 census with a smaller amount (1,000 people) listed as domestic cleaners.

Life cycle assessment of cleaning services by the Trust, Nordic Swan and Green Seal has identified that the cleaning products used, cleaning techniques, business related transport and waste management can all have significant environmental impacts. The main environmental impacts occur during the service provision and disposal phases but these can be significantly influenced by the service providers' procurement and staff training policies.

Cleaning companies have an opportunity to contribute positively to the environment by careful selection of the cleaning products, consumables and equipment they use, by training staff to use environmentally preferable techniques, and by effective waste management.

Based on a review of currently available information, the environmental criteria in this specification will produce benefits by:

- reducing the environmental impacts associated with the use of hazardous substances;
- conserving resources by use of environmentally preferable consumables and recycling; and
- reducing energy consumption, greenhouse gases (GHG) and other emissions to air.

Health & Safety benefits may also accrue, both to the cleaning staff and the occupiers of the building, as fewer and less hazardous chemicals are used.

As information and technology change, the service provision requirements in this specification will be reviewed, updated and possibly amended.

3 Interpretation

Building management means the owner, occupier or tenant of the building who contracts the service provider for cleaning services, ie the client.

Disinfecting means the process of killing the majority of microorganisms (bacteria, viruses) on an article. Disinfecting significantly reduces the level of microorganisms but does not sterilise.

ECA means Eco Choice Aotearoa.

GEN means Global Ecolabelling Network.

ISO means International Organisation for Standardisation.

Label means the Eco Choice Aotearoa Label.

PPE means personal protective equipment, eg gloves, goggles etc.

Safety Data Sheet (SDS) means a document that describes the properties and uses of a substance, that is, identity, chemical and physical properties, health hazard information, precautions for use and safe handling information in accordance with the New Zealand Chemical Industry Council – Preparation of Safety Data Sheets Code of Practice. SDS were previously called Material Safety Data Sheets or MSDS.

Volatile organic compound (VOC) means any organic compound which has a vapour pressure more than 0.1mm Hg at 25 °C. Organic compounds with a boiling point higher than 250 °C, measured at a standard pressure of 101.3 kPa, are not considered to be VOCs.

4 Category definition

This category applies to general cleaning services, including cleaning for commercial premises (eg offices, retail premises), institutional premises (eg schools, hospitals, prisons) and residential premises. Disinfection is excluded from the category.

This category includes standard cleaning procedures (up to monthly frequency) and periodic cleaning (eg window cleaning, cleaning ceilings and walls, polishing floors and restorative strip and re-finish of hard floor surfaces). Building maintenance (eg painting) and specialist services (eg carpet shampooing with speciality chemicals) are not included.

The licensed cleaning service may be provided by a contracted service provider or by in-house cleaning staff.

To be licensed to use the Label, a cleaning service must meet all of the environmental criteria set out in clause 5 and service characteristics in clause 6.

Note

An Eco Choice licence is not an endorsement for the cleaning company or provider itself, but applies specifically to individual cleaning services that meet the requirements of this specification.

The cleaning service provider is not prevented from also offering special cleaning or other services (including disinfection) that are not covered by the licence criteria. However, the special cleaning or other non-complying services must not be marketed as ECA-licensed services.

5 Environmental criteria

5.1 Legal requirements

Criteria

The service must comply with the provisions of all relevant environmental laws and regulations that are applicable during the service's life cycle.

Verification required

Conformance with this requirement shall be demonstrated by providing a written statement on regulatory compliance, signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the applicant company. This statement shall be supported by documentation identifying the applicable regulatory requirements and demonstrating how compliance is monitored and maintained.

Explanatory notes

Relevant laws and regulations could, for example, include those that relate to:

- i sourcing, transporting, handling and storing cleaning products or other materials;
- ii service provision; and
- iii handling, transporting and disposing of waste products arising from service provision.

The documentation required may include, as appropriate:

- procedures for approving and monitoring suppliers and supplies; and
- information provided to customers, contractors and staff regarding regulatory requirements.

It is not intended to require licence holders to accept increased legal responsibility or liability for actions that are outside their control.

5.2 Cleaning service agreements

Criteria

- a A formal written service agreement or contract must be in place, between the cleaning service provider and the building management, for the services to be covered by an ECA licence.
- b The service agreement shall include a schedule of standard (up to monthly) cleaning activities to be undertaken. Where the service provider is undertaking additional cleaning activities that are outside the scope of the licence, the agreement shall include a schedule of those additional cleaning activities that are outside the scope of the ECA licence. The schedule shall clearly identify that those additional activities are outside the scope of the licence.
- c Where cleaning is carried out to a predetermined schedule, this shall aim to minimise unnecessary cleaning.
- d The cleaning service provider shall discuss any client/building specific environmental requirements, assess potential hazards and identify these in the cleaning service agreement. Drains connected to sewers suitable for cleaning staff use shall be identified, as shall any stormwater drains to avoid.
- e The cleaning service provider shall propose and discuss with their client providing a service that includes:
 - daytime cleaning, if the service provider is able to offer this;

- provision and use of environmentally preferable cleaning chemicals and consumables for the cleaning activity, including noting that all cleaning chemicals used must be ECA-licensed cleaning chemicals.
- the service provider’s responsibilities to its employees, including meeting its obligations under the Employment Relations Amendment Act 2014; and
- assisting to establish a recycling scheme for waste generated by the building occupants (where none is already in operation) or reviewing an existing recycling programme with the aim of further reducing waste to landfill.

Verification required

Conformance with these requirements shall be stated in writing and signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the applicant company. This statement shall be supported by:

- Extracts of the relevant contract/service agreement; and
- Documented evidence of assessment of environmental hazards with the building management as referenced in (d) and discussions of services referenced in (e).

5.3 Procurement and record keeping

The criteria in Clause 5.3 apply to procurement of cleaning chemicals, consumables and plastic bags used in ECA-licensed cleaning services.

The structure of a cleaning company (franchise, self-employed contractors, employees etc) will affect what is under the control of the service provider. It is not intended to require licence holders to accept responsibility for actions that are outside their control. However, it is expected that influence will be exerted to encourage compliance with these criteria and evidence of this will be sought.

Criteria

- a The service provider must have and effectively implement a policy of procuring environmentally preferable equipment (including vehicles), products and services that support its cleaning service activity, this may include energy efficiency, durability, recyclability, third party certification.
- b The service provider must purchase and use ECA-licensed chemical cleaning products, sanitary paper products, soaps and toiletries for all cleaning services covered by the ECA licence.
- c The service provider shall provide evidence of purchase of chemical cleaning products licensed by ECA, including records of quantities purchased on a minimum quarterly basis per full time equivalent (FTE) service provider staff member.
- d In order to track progress toward minimising the quantity of consumables used, the service provider shall record details of quantities of consumables purchased including plastic bags, cleaning cloths and mop heads.
- e The service provider shall prefer purchase of cleaning tools, cloths, mops etc that are reusable, recyclable, and/or have recycled content.

Verification required

Conformance with these requirements shall be stated in writing and signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the applicant company. This statement shall be supported by:

- The cleaning service provider’s company procurement policy;
- Annual reports on its implementation;
- Evidence that ECA-licensed chemical cleaning products are purchased for all cleaning services covered by the ECA-licence;

- Documented evidence of chemical consumption per FTE service provider staff member - quantities may be recorded by volume, weight, no. of bottles etc as long as the measure is consistent and will allow changes in consumption to be observed;
- Documented evidence of quantities and types of consumables purchased (e.g. plastic bags, cleaning cloths and mop heads);
- Details of purchasing decisions made to prefer purchase of cleaning tools, cloths, mops etc that are reusable, recyclable, and/or have recycled content; and
- Details of purchasing decisions made to prefer purchase of equipment (including powered equipment and vehicles) that are environmentally preferable.

Where it can be demonstrated that any of the procurement criteria in 5.3 are outside the control of the service provider, evidence should instead be provided of efforts to influence the purchaser.

Explanatory notes

Where the procurement of the products is outside the control of the service provider, such as if the client demands a specific non-ECA-licensed product for an ordinary cleaning activity, then the service would need to be offered under a non-ECA licensed service agreement.

5.4 Cleaning operations

Criteria

The service provider must ensure the following are available for cleaning staff:

- appropriate information on health, safety and environmental hazards associated with individual cleaning chemicals and instruction on safe handling;
- suitable PPE if required;
- easily understandable written instructions on dilution, use and disposal of cleaning chemicals – including where necessary, diagrams or illustrations to help staff with limited English proficiency;
- a system for correctly diluting chemicals that minimises worker exposure (eg dosage devices, dispensing units, measuring cups etc.);
- appropriate applicators for all cleaning chemicals that do not result in over use (eg coarse spray bottles, auto dispensers on powered equipment etc);
- easily understandable written instructions on rinsing, returning for refill, recycling or disposal of used chemical containers and applicators;
- instruction and/or training on cleaning methods that minimise or eliminate the need for chemical use wherever possible, e.g. the use of microfibre cloths to reduce chemical usage;
- written instruction that disinfectants shall not be used;
- written instructions on how to inspect and maintain cleaning tools and equipment;
- written instructions on how to incorporate waste management into the cleaning service;
- a procedure for laundering re-usable cloths and /or mop heads;
- a process for checking and reviewing these work instructions/procedures to ensure that they are up-to-date; and
- a process for testing and maintaining powered equipment in accordance with legal requirements.

Verification required

Conformance with these requirements shall be stated in writing and signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the applicant company. This statement shall be supported by:

- Copies of instructions for:
 - dilution, use and disposal of cleaning chemicals;

- rinsing etc of used chemical containers and applicators;
- inspection and maintenance of cleaning tools and equipment;
- incorporation of waste management into the cleaning service; and
- not using disinfectants for cleaning office areas.
- Copies of information provided on chemical hazards.
- Description of:
 - how and what PPE is provided;
 - systems provided for dilution;
 - applicators used to prevent overuse; and
 - how instruction is provided on methods that minimise or eliminate chemical use.
- A copy of the laundry procedure for laundering re-usable cloths and /or mop heads.
- Evidence of the review process.
- Evidence of checks undertaken to inform the review of work instructions/ procedures.
- Evidence that the legal requirements for testing and maintenance of powered equipment have been identified and that the required testing and maintenance has been completed.

5.5 Management systems and procedures

5.5.1 Environmental hazard and spill control

Criteria

Any special environmental hazards or requirements associated with the service contract or location will be identified in the service contract.

- a The service provider must have in place procedures for dealing with environmental hazards and accidental spills as they may arise on a work site.
- b Procedures for environmental hazards and spills must:
 - be freely available to all cleaning staff in a format that will be easily understandable;
 - include provision of suitable spill kits and equipment; and
 - require recording of all chemical spills on a readily accessible report form or logbook.
- c The service provider must ensure procedures for environmental hazards and spills are covered in training and that this is recorded.

Verification required

Conformance with these requirements shall be stated in writing and signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the applicant company. This statement shall be supported by:

- The cleaning company environmental hazard and spill control procedure;
- An example spill report form/ logbook and records of any spills;
- Evidence that staff training covers these areas; and
- A description of and information on the contents of spill kits.

5.5.2 Staff training

Criteria

- a The cleaning service provider shall provide initial training, on-site or site specific training and annual in-service training for all staff.
- b Training must cover:
 - relevant criteria in this specification, work instructions and/or procedures;

- information on Health, Safety and Environmental hazards associated with cleaning chemicals, include SDS information where appropriate;
 - any site specific requirements for each job the staff work on;
 - inspection and maintenance of cleaning tools and equipment in accordance with manufacturer’s recommendations;
 - waste management and minimisation as part of the cleaning service delivery;
 - minimising fuel consumption through route planning, driving style and regular vehicle maintenance;
 - the importance of minimising environmental impacts and the ways that cleaning staff can help; and
 - communication channels within the cleaning company and to the building management.
- c The cleaning service provider shall maintain a staff training plan identifying appropriate training and maintain a record of training for each employee.
- d The cleaning service provider must ensure that appropriate training occurs before cleaning staff begin independent work.
- e The cleaning service provider must ensure that training respects any unique needs such as limited English proficiency.
- f The cleaning service provider must undertake initial and refresher training of procurement staff to select environmentally preferable cleaning materials and to consider fuel efficiency when purchasing fleet vehicles.

Verification required

Conformance with these requirements shall be stated in writing and signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the applicant company. This statement shall be supported by:

- Copies of relevant staff training material and programmes;
- Evidence that all staff are trained in a planned manner;
- Evidence that initial training takes place before staff begin independent work;
- Evidence that consideration is given to any unique needs of the Trainees; and
- Evidence of the procurement officers’ skills and knowledge relevant to procurement.

5.6 Waste management

5.6.1 Waste generated by the cleaning service provider

Criteria

- a The service provider must implement effective waste management policies and procedures and/or a waste management programme covering service delivery operations, including waste produced by the cleaning service provider’s offices that are associated with the ECA - licensed service contracts.
- b All items that are acceptable for local recycling must be separated from the cleaning service provider’s general waste and taken to the designated areas for collection.
- c Licence holders must report annually to The Trust on waste management, including:
- quantity of waste recycled and how that waste is recycled (e.g. taken to local transfer station);
 - quantity of waste disposed to landfill; and
 - initiatives taken to reduce waste generation and improve recovery/recycling of waste.

Verification required

Conformance with these requirements shall be stated in writing and signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the applicant company. This statement shall be supported by:

- The waste management policies, procedures and programmes or relevant extracts;
- Annual reports to The Trust on waste generation by the service provider (including recycling, disposal to landfill, minimisation and management), including from the cleaning service provider's offices; and
- Waste generated in relation to service delivery may be reported as kg waste/time cleaning or equivalent measure that will allow trends to be observed.

5.6.2 Waste generated by the building occupants

Criteria

- a Where the building management has a waste minimisation/ recycling programme, the cleaning service provider must take all practicable steps to support the programme. This must include reporting problem areas and working with the building management to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of waste diversion systems.
- b All recyclable wastes sorted by the building occupants must be kept separate and taken to the designated areas for collection.

Verification required

Conformance with these requirements shall be stated in writing and signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the applicant company. This statement shall be accompanied by documentation that:

- Describes the methods the service provider uses to support building management with its waste minimisation/ recycling programme; and
- Extracts of the service agreement and/or work instructions that describe how the requirements are to be met.

5.7 Energy management

Criteria

The cleaning service provider must ensure work instructions include:

- a any specific requirements in the service agreement necessary to assist the building management achieve its own energy management objectives;
- b requirements for servicing vehicles regularly in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations; and
- c general requirements to minimise the use of energy, including minimising vehicle fuel usage.

Verification required

Conformance with these requirements shall be stated in writing and signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the applicant company. This statement shall be supported by:

- extracts from the service agreement;
- a copy of vehicle servicing records; and
- relevant work instructions.

6 Service Characteristics

Criteria

- a The service provider must have a system for monitoring the quality of cleaning service delivery against the service agreement/contract and for taking corrective action if required to meet the requirements of the agreement; and
- b The cleaning service provider must have a system to allow written communication and feedback between the client and the service provider about the cleaning service delivery.

Verification required

Conformance with these requirements shall be demonstrated by providing a written statement of compliance, signed by the Chief Executive Officer or other authorised representative of the applicant company. This statement shall be supported by documentation that:

- details of the quality monitoring system (e.g. internal audits), and any corrective actions taken in response to quality monitoring; and
- records client feedback, complaints and corrective actions.

7 Requirements and notes for licence holders

Monitoring compliance

Prior to granting a licence, The Trust will prepare a plan for monitoring ongoing compliance with these requirements. This plan will reflect the number and type of services covered by the licence and the level of sampling appropriate to provide confidence in ongoing compliance with criteria. This plan will be discussed with the licence applicant and when agreed will be a condition of the licence.

As part of the plan, The Trust will require access to relevant quality control and service delivery records and the right of access to service facilities. Relevant records may include formal quality management or environmental management system documentation (for example, ISO 9001 or ISO 14001 or similar).

The monitoring plan will require the licence holder to advise The Trust immediately of any noncompliance with any requirements of this specification which may occur during the term of the licence. If a non-compliance occurs, the licence may be suspended or terminated as stipulated in the Licence Conditions. The licensee may appeal any such suspension.

The Trust will maintain the confidentiality of identified confidential information provided and accessed during verification and monitoring of licences.

Use of Eco Choice Aotearoa Label

The licence holder shall supply information on the proposed use of the label on products or services and promotional material.

Wherever it appears, the Label must be accompanied by the Licence Number e.g. 'licence No.1234'. It is optional to include the spec name.

The Label must be reproduced in accordance with:

- The Licence Conditions; and
- The Eco Choice Aotearoa programme's brand kit which includes examples of keyline art for reproduction of the Label

Any advertising must conform to the relevant requirements in this specification, in the Licence Conditions keyline art.

Failure to meet these requirements for using the Eco Choice Aotearoa Label and advertising could result in the Licence being withdrawn