TE Recycled Claim Standard

2013

The *TE Recycled Claim Standard* (RCS) is a standard for tracking and verifying the content of recycled materials in a final product.

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Foreword

Textile Exchange (TE) is an international, member-supported non-profit organization that was established in 2003 under the original name of Organic Exchange. Textile Exchange’s mission is to accelerate sustainable practices in the textile industry. This acceleration only happens when steps have been taken to ensure that actions taken toward sustainability result in real and meaningful change. This requires a strong understanding of the issues and a plan to substantiate the claims being made. Certification to a third-party standard accomplishes this.

Textile Exchange’s chain-of-custody standards are developed to maintain the identity of a raw material and track that raw material from input to the final product. The Content Claim Standard (CCS) applies these two principles, and can be used for any raw material on a business-to-business basis, and forms the foundation of the Organic Content Standard (OCS), used to identify and track organic materials, and the TE Recycled Claim Standard (RCS), which identifies and tracks recycled materials.

The final drafts of all standards have been reviewed by the Outdoor Industry Association Materials Traceability Working Group, along with broader industry stakeholder input.

Introduction

The goal of the RCS is to give credibility to recycled content claims on products. By protecting the trust of consumers as they choose products made of recycled materials, we hope to contribute to the increased use of recycled materials, and a reduction in the amount of waste sent to landfills or incineration.

The RCS uses the chain-of-custody requirements of the Content Claim Standard (CCS). On its own, the CCS is a generic standard for chain-of-custody verification. This common set of requirements across TE’s standards contributes to the consistency and efficiency of the certification process. Once a company has been certified to the CCS requirements for one standard, they meet the same chain-of-custody requirements for other standards based on the CCS.

The TE Recycled Claim Standard verifies the presence and amount of recycled material in a final product through input and chain-of-custody verification from a third party. It allows for transparent,
consistent and comprehensive independent evaluation and verification of recycled material content claims on products. It can be used as a business-to-business tool to give companies the means to ensure that they are getting what they are paying for and selling, or as a way to ensure accurate and honest communication with consumers.

The RCS uses the ISO 14021 definition of recycled content, with interpretations based on the US Federal Trade Commission Green Guides; the intention is to comply with the most widely recognized and stringent definitions. Sellers of RCS products are advised to reference the allowed recycled content claims in the countries of sale, to ensure that they are meeting all legal product claim requirements.

The RCS does not address other inputs, environmental aspects of processing (such as energy, water or chemical use), any quality or social issues, or legal compliance.

Intended users of the RCS are recyclers, manufacturers, brands and retailers, certification bodies, and organizations supporting recycled material initiatives.

This is a voluntary standard that is not intended to replace the legal or regulatory requirements of any country. It is the responsibility of each operation to demonstrate compliance with all applicable laws and regulations related to marketing, labour and business practices.

The RCS will be reviewed every three years with the next scheduled revision taking place in 2016. In the meantime, suggestion for revisions or adjustments will be accepted for consideration during the regular review. You may submit your comments to Integrity@TextileExchange.org. Points of clarification will be made more frequently through the CCS Implementation Manual.

The RCS Logos were designed by Troy Tucker.
Section A - Requirements for Certification

A1 - References

A1.1 Reference Documents

The following additional documents cover the requirements of the TE Recycled Claim Standard, and are fully binding:

- Content Claim Standard
- Content Claim Standard Implementation Manual

All documents can be found at http://textileexchange.org/RCS.

A1.2 Definitions

The Content Claim Standard has a complete set of the terms used in the TE standards. The following are specific to the RCS, and are important in defining the verification requirements for the input materials for recycling:

A1.2a Material Collection: Material collection refers to the point in the recycling lifecycle when a material is reclaimed from the waste stream.

Entities involved in material collection could include, but are not limited to:

- Individuals who collect post-consumer materials for sale to brokers
- Government organizations (eg: municipalities) that offer curbside recycling or operate transfer stations
- Brokers that purchase pre/post-consumer waste from individuals, municipalities, or commercial operations for re-sale
- Commercial operations that generate pre-consumer waste from manufacturing operations
- Commercial operations that collect post-consumer waste (eg: retail stores)

A1.2b Material Concentration: Material concentration refers to the point in the recycling lifecycle when a reclaimed material receives primary handling. This may include, but is not limited to, sorting, screening, basic contaminant removal, or baling. Material is still unprocessed at this stage, meaning it has not been physically or chemically altered beyond basic handling, e.g. screening, crushing, or washing.

Entities involved in material concentration must have legal authorization to operate as one of the following:

- Government organization (eg: municipality)
- Non-profit organization
- Business entity (eg: brokers)

A1.2c Material Recycling: Material recycling refers to the point in the recycling lifecycle when a reclaimed material is processed into a recycled material.

A1.2d Reclaimed Material: Material that would have otherwise been disposed of as waste or used for
energy recovery, but has instead been collected and reclaimed as a material input, in lieu of new primary material, for a recycling process.\(^1\)

i. **Post-Consumer Material**: Material generated by households or by commercial, industrial, and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product that can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of materials from the distribution chain.\(^2\)

ii. **Pre-Consumer Material**: Material diverted from the waste stream during the manufacturing process. Excluded is the reutilization of materials such as rework, regrind or scrap generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated it.\(^3,4\)

A1.2e **Recycled content**: Proportion, by mass, of recycled material in goods or packaging. Only pre-consumer and post-consumer materials shall be considered as recycled content.

A1.2f **Recycled Material**: Material that has been reprocessed from reclaimed material by means of a manufacturing process and made into a final product or into a component for incorporation into a product.\(^5\)

### A2 - Compliance Requirements - Recycled Materials

Entities involved in Material Collection, Material Concentration, and Material Recycling of inputs to be used in RCS certified products must submit declarations for the materials they are supplying. Entities may handle one or multiple of these stages. Certification to the RCS is required for entities involved in Material Recycling.

To summarize:

- Material Collection: random audits; self-declaration
- Material Concentration: random audits; self-declaration
- Material Recycling: full RCS certification; transaction certificates
- Production and Trading: full RCS certification, with exceptions for subcontractors and low volume traders; transaction certificates

The requirements for each stage up to and including recycling are as follows:

A2.1 **Material Collection**

A2.1a Entities involved in Material Collection are not subject to RCS certification and materials from the collection stage may not claim to be certified to the RCS.

A2.1b Entities involved in Material Collection (as defined in A1.2a), with the exception of individuals, are required to submit the Reclaimed Material Declaration Form (see Appendix A). The

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1 This excerpt is taken from ISO 14021:1999, section 7.8.1.1, subsection c on page 14, with the permission of ANSI on behalf of ISO. © ISO 2013 – All rights reserved.
2 This excerpt is taken from ISO 14021:1999, section 7.8.1.1, subsection a.2 on page 14, with the permission of ANSI on behalf of ISO. © ISO 2013 – All rights reserved.
3 This excerpt is taken from ISO 14021:1999, section 7.8.1.1, subsection a.1 on page 14, with the permission of ANSI on behalf of ISO. © ISO 2013 – All rights reserved.
4 For a detailed interpretation of pre-consumer recycled content, please refer to the Content Claim Standard Implementation Manual, page 19.
5 This excerpt is taken from ISO 14021:1999, section 7.8.1.1, subsection b on page 14, with the permission of ANSI on behalf of ISO. © ISO 2013 – All rights reserved.
Reclaimed Material Declaration Form must be submitted to consignees on an annual basis for all reclaimed materials being supplied for use in RCS products. The Reclaimed Material Declaration Form declares that the facility will allow inspections with a minimum of 3 days notice by Certification Bodies accredited to the RCS.

A2.2 Material Concentration

A2.2a Entities involved in Material Concentration are not subject to RCS certification and materials from the concentration stage may not claim to be certified to the RCS.

A2.2b Entities involved in Material Concentration (as defined in A1.2b) are required to submit the Reclaimed Material Declaration Form (see Appendix A). The Reclaimed Material Declaration Form must be submitted to consignees on an annual basis for all reclaimed materials being supplied for use in RCS products. The Reclaimed Material Declaration Form declares that the facility will allow inspections with a minimum of 3 days notice by Certification Bodies accredited to the RCS.

A2.3 Material Recycling

A2.3a Entities involved in Material Recycling (as defined in A1.2c) are subject to RCS certification. The RCS requires compliance with the requirements (sections A, B, C and D) of the Content Claim Standard, whereby the ‘Claimed Material’ is replaced with ‘Recycled Material’ as defined in section A1.2f.

A2.3b In addition, entities involved in Material Recycling must:

i. Hold valid Reclaimed Material Declaration Forms for all RCS input materials, or proof of verification to an accepted standard (see TE Accepted Equivalent Standards).

ii. Verify that all sources of reclaimed material have legal authorization to operate for the relevant function, and hold copies of the relevant documents.

iii. Inspect all incoming shipments of reclaimed material to confirm that they are not virgin material. In the case that virgin material is identified, increased control measures must be applied for all incoming goods from the supplier involved, and the supplier of the material and the Certification Body shall be notified.

iv. Request Transaction Certificates for all outgoing RCS certified goods.

A3 Compliance Requirements – Production

A3.1 Application of Production Requirements

Organizations involved in production of RCS goods are subject to RCS certification. The TE Recycled Claim Standard requires compliance with the requirements (sections A, B, C and D) of the Content Claim Standard, whereby the ‘Claimed Material’ is replaced with ‘Recycled Material’ as defined in section A1.2f.

A3.2 Production

In addition to the requirements of the CCS, all organizations involved in the production of RCS products must meet the following requirements:

A3.2a All recycled materials entering the supply chain must have a valid Transaction Certificate
(TC) issued by an approved CB.

A3.2b The amounts of pre-consumer and post-consumer waste must be recorded separately at all steps of production.

A3.2c Traders with an annual turnover of less than $10,000 of RCS goods, and retailers selling to end consumers only, are exempt from the certification obligation; provided that they do not (re-) pack or (re-)label RCS Goods. Exempted traders with less than $10,000 annual turnover of RCS Goods must register with an Approved Certification Body and must inform the Certification Body immediately once their annual turnover exceeds $10,000, or once they plan to (re-)pack or (re-)label RCS goods.

A3.2d In cases where there is the possibility of differential rates of production loss between recycled and virgin inputs, organizations must address this through their mass balance formula.

A3.2e Buyers of the RCS product will be responsible to set any further requirements on the specific standards or requirements to which the input material must be certified. These additional requirements are separate from the RCS and its certification process.
Section B - Labeling

B1 - Labeling Language

The RCS standard applies to products that contain 5 -100% Recycled Material.

Material refers to the raw material created as the output of the recycling process. The RCS can be applied to individual components of a product, as long as they are each certified to the standard.

B1.1 Labeling to the TE Recycled Claim Standard

If the Certified Organization chooses to label the finished products as containing Recycled Material, it may make reference to the RCS and use the following language:

- “Made with/Contains 100% Recycled Material” only for products composed of 100% Recycled Material. The RCS 100 logo may be used.

- “Made with/Contains X% Recycled Material” for products composed of 5-95% Recycled Material. There are no restrictions on the remaining content. The RCS Blended logo may be used. It is also permitted to state “Made with/Contains a minimum of X% Recycled Material”.

In all cases, ‘X%’ represents the minimum final percentage of Recycled Material by appropriate unit of measure in the finished product.

Pre- and post-consumer content amounts may be called out separately.
Section C - Logo Use

C1 - Use of RCS Logos

C1.1 Certification Bodies

C1.1a Certification Bodies are responsible for issuing RCS logos for use on goods that have been certified up to the point where the logos are applied. Certification Bodies will be required to check for proper use of the RCS logos on goods during the certification process. They are not responsible for checking logos in the marketplace.

C1.1b Certification Bodies may use the RCS logos to unambiguously indicate that they are accredited to certify goods to RCS standards in their marketing and public relations materials.

C1.1c Certification Bodies are required to use the RCS logo on all Scope Certificates and Transaction Certificates, as indicated in the corresponding templates and policies.

C1.2 Certified Organizations

C1.2a Certified Organizations may apply RCS logos only on goods certified to the RCS. Logos must be obtained from the Certification Body that has certified their goods.

C1.2b Certified Organizations with current certification to the RCS may use the logos to indicate they are ‘Certified to produce goods in accordance with TE Recycled Claim Standard’ in their marketing and public relations materials. It must be made clear that not all products will be RCS certified, unless it is the case that 100% of production is certified.

C1.3 Brands and Retailers

C1.3a Brands and retailers may only have logos applied to goods that have been certified to the end of the supply chain (i.e.: the last step of ownership must have been certified). Only Certified Organizations may apply the logos to final products: if a brand or retailer is not certified to the RCS, then they may request to their supplier that the logo is applied to their goods. If brands or retailers are (re)packaging or (re)labeling goods, they must be certified.

The RCS logo may also be used in off-product communication (web, print, signage), as long as all of the guidelines in Section D are followed, and there is no chance that non-certified products may be confused with the certified products.

Use of the logo is not mandatory.

If a brand or retailer is receiving goods and then selling them on to other retailers, then the original brand/retailer must be certified if the goods are labelled with the RCS logo. For example, brand A sells to retailer B, brand A must be certified.

C1.3b If products are being identified as certified to the RCS, then the logo must be used, and ‘Certified to TE RCS 100 and/or Blended’ may also be added. The specifications set out in sections D1 and D2 must be followed.

C1.3c Individual components of a product may be identified as certified to the RCS but only in a manner that makes it completely clear that it is only the identified component that contains...
Recycled Material, and not the whole product. For example, only the sole of a shoe is made with 100% recycled material.

C1.3d The brand or retailer is responsible to check on the labelling laws of the country or countries of sale to ensure they are meeting all legal requirements.

C2 - Misuse of RCS Logos

Textile Exchange will pursue all legal means to stop and remedy any unauthorized or misleading use of the RCS logo. Textile Exchange will also make public any misuse of the RCS logo in order to maintain trust in the TE Recycled Claim Standard.
Section D - Product Identification

D1 - Identification of RCS Goods

D1.1 Products

All logos must follow the design specifications set out in section D2.

Logos may also be accompanied by text saying ‘Certified to TE RCS 100’ or ‘Certified to TE RCS Blended.’

D1.1a When an RCS logo is used, there must be a reference to the Certification Body that has certified the goods (e.g. Certification Body’s name and/or logo) and a reference to the Certified Organization (e.g. Certified Organization’s name and/or license number).

Example:

Made with/Contains 100% Recycled Material
Certified by Certification Body Name
Certified Organization’s License #

Made with/Contains X% Recycled Material
Certified by Certification Body Name
Certified Organization’s License #

The wording can be translated into the local language of the country of sale, as long as the meaning does not change. In all cases, the wording must appear below or beside the logo.

D1.1b The RCS logo must not be permanently printed on or affixed to any reusable packaging.

D1.2 Certification documents

When used on Transaction Certificates, the logo must appear in the RCS colour only (Pantone 321M), and meet the design specifications set out in section D2.

RCS logo use on Scope Certificates and Transaction Certificates must comply with prescribed corresponding templates/policies.

D1.3 Marketing and Advertising

All logos must follow the design specifications set out in section D2.
D2 - Design Specifications

D2.1 Logo

In all cases, the logos must appear as follows, using design files provided directly from Textile Exchange or through the accredited Certification Body:

D2.2 Color

Unless otherwise noted, the logo can appear in gray scale or Pantone 321 M.

D2.3 Size

The logo and wording must be of a size large enough to be clear and legible: the minimum size is 10 mm.

D3 - Obtaining a Logo

D3.1 Certification Bodies

Certification Bodies that are authorized by Textile Exchange to certify to the RCS may request the logos by contacting Textile Exchange.

D3.2 Certified Organizations

Certified Organizations may request logos from the Certification Body responsible for certification of their products.
Section E - Tools and Resources

E1 - Textile Exchange Certification Toolkit - Essential Series

The Certification Toolkit has been developed to provide increased clarity for brands and retailers trying to understand how to most accurately certify their products. This tool helps to address issues around why certification is important, the essential steps, understanding certificates, pricing and labeling.

The guide is free to members of Textile Exchange, or can be purchased on its own by non-members. For more information please visit http://www.textileexchange.org/content/certification-toolkit.

E2 - Questions and Additional Information

For questions or additional information about the RCS please contact: Integrity@TextileExchange.org.
# Appendix A - Reclaimed Material Declaration Form

Reclaimed Material Declaration Form

This document acts as a guarantee that all of the materials listed below and being sold to ______________________ are reclaimed materials that would have otherwise gone into the waste stream. It is valid for one year, effective ________________.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product*</th>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Post-Consumer</th>
<th>Pre-Consumer</th>
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* see following page for definitions

This document also confirms that our organization will allow for our facilities to be inspected with a minimum of 3 days notice by Certification Bodies accredited to the TE Recycled Claim Standard.

Signed by:

Title:

On behalf of:

(Company name)

__________________________    _________________
(Signature)        (Date)
Definitions

**Product:** Name of the items that have been diverted from the waste stream. Examples include: plastic bottles, fishing nets, yarns, wool carpet, paper.

**Material:** The material that will be recycled. (eg: polyester, nylon, wool etc.)

**Source:** Where did material come from? Examples include: cutting room waste, household recycling collection, rejected yarn stock, office paper waste. If it is not clear that the goods would have otherwise gone into the waste stream, please provide more detail.

**Pre/Post-Consumer:** Please check one, based on the following definitions:

- **Pre-Consumer Waste**
  Material diverted from the waste stream during the manufacturing process. Excluded is the reutilization of materials such as rework, regrind or scrap generated in a process and capable of being reclaimed within the same process that generated it.

- **Post-Consumer Waste**
  Material generated by households or by commercial, industrial and institutional facilities in their role as end-users of the product that can no longer be used for its intended purpose. This includes returns of materials from the distribution chain.

* Note that each country may have different criteria to qualify pre-consumer and post-consumer waste. It is best to check with the governing body to be sure that their expectations are being met. For further resources see [www.TextileExchange.org/standards](http://www.TextileExchange.org/standards).