

APPLYING FOR OK COMPOST (HOME)

Frequently Asked Questions

CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE

1 What does it cost?

Depending on the type of product, more or less tests have to be done, and more or less time is needed. Therefore we need a clear product description in order to give a quotation (price offer) and time estimation. If you want a quotation, you can fill in our application form (see also question 3)*.

2 What are the main steps in order to obtain a certificate and how long do they take?

Step 1: Testing: by a specified test laboratory as described on our list of laboratories *

Duration: Depending on the type of product test duration varies from zero months (no tests necessary) to maximum 6 months for OK Compost and maximum 12 months for OK Compost HOME.

Step 2: Certification: by Vincotte (based on the test results)

Duration: In case all tests have been performed or in case no tests are necessary and all required product documentation is provided to Vincotte, certification takes two or three weeks.

3 What documentation do I need to provide about my product?

- Clear description of the product
- Requested test reports
- Samples of the product to be certified (see also question 4)

NOTE – All necessary information is requested in the application form *

4 How many samples do we need to send?

One sample for each product that will be certified is sufficient. In case a family of similar products is to be certified, it is sufficient to submit samples of representative “cornerstones” of this product family, completed with clear descriptions of the other family members.

Advised size for film samples: ca 10 x 10 cm or larger. Advised quantity for granulates: a handful.

TERMINOLOGY

5 What is the difference between biodegradable and compostable?

The difference between compostability and biodegradation is explained in document 2BR24 *.

6 If my product has proven to be biodegradable, why do I still need a disintegration test?

The requirement of EN 13432 says that 90% of your product has to be disintegrated (=physically fallen apart) within 3 months. Therefore the shape and thickness (amount of available contact surface) is extremely important for the disintegration test. For example: a three stump that is fully degradable will not pass the disintegration test because it is too thick: the microorganisms will not reach the inner part of the stump within three months.

For this reason it is necessary that you perform the disintegration test on the product in its ultimate shape or thickness. Of course once a product is tested for a certain thickness, it can also be certified for lower thicknesses.

7 What is the difference between OK Compost and OK Compost HOME?

OK Compost is conform to EN 13432 and OK Compost HOME is based on EN 13432, but at ambient temperatures. You find more explanation about this in document 2BR25 *.

* This document will be sent to you at your request.

NECESSARY TESTS

8 What test reports do I need?

The European Norm about compostability of packaging (EN 13432) requires (besides a clear and detailed description of the product) 4 tests:

- test on **biodegradation** (chemical break down of the polymer)
- test on **disintegration** (physically falling apart of the product in small fragments)
- test on **ecotoxicity** (test if the composted product does not exert any negative effect on plants)
- test on **heavy metals** content

NOTE – Biodegradation, ecotoxicity and heavy metal content are characteristics of the *material*, whereas disintegration is a characteristic of the *material and shape* (final product).

9 I have only tested the *material* of the final product? Can these test reports be used for certification the final product?

Provided that the product is 100% made of the tested material, test results for

- *biodegradability*
- *heavy metal content and*
- *ecotoxicity*

can be used for certification of the final product (see also question 8).

This is not always the case for the disintegration test (see also question 6).

(More technical details about this: see document 2BR13 *)

10 How do I know if my test reports are useful for the certification process?

If your test report is not coming from a laboratory that is approved by us (see list of approved laboratories *), a thorough check is needed in order to verify the test reports.

However you can check in advance if the following basic conditions are fulfilled:

- The report must mention the reference of the standard of the used test method.
- The report must not only mention the conclusion, but must also report the quantitative test results.

NOTE - The requirements for a test report are always described in the corresponding test standard.

* This document will be sent to you at your request.



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