

CODE FOR CONSTRUCTION PRODUCT INFORMATION




WORDS AND PHRASES TO AVOID USING

FOREWORD




The Code for Construction Product Information is built around five 'acid tests' - that product information should be clear, accurate, up-to-date, accessible and unambiguous. Indeed, to conform with clause three of the Code, manufacturers must "not use mis-leading or ambiguous wording.... and embrace the use of plain English to ensure accurate representation of 'Product Information' and performance claims".

Many manufacturers, merchants, and distributors have asked whether there are specific words and phrases that should be avoided across the sector. To help provide clarity we have compiled a list that in most cases, should be avoided unless the wording or phrases can be contextualised and defined.


Please note - *The list provided is not intended to be exhaustive - it should be used as a guide not as definitive list; there will be many more specific words that should be avoided depending on the product and the requirements of your relevant trade association(s).*




| Word & phrases to avoid  | Why these should be avoided – explanation  | Acceptable use  |
|---|--|---|
| Pre- and -post fixes: Eco- Bio- Non- -Friendly | Pre-fixes, for example eco or bio used in product names or logos to infer an environmental benefit, must be avoided without relevant performance data. Post-fixes, for example animal-friendly must be avoided without relevant performance data. | Where pre-fixes and post-fixes are used performance must be accurately defined and documented in the product information to substantiate the claim. They should also be traceable to national standards or appropriate testing. |
| Negative Carbon Carbon Neutral Net Zero Sustainable Product | These terms should be avoided without specific context. | For example, you could state ‘the carbon in this product has been offset using an accredited scheme [name the scheme]’ but you can’t state the same for the terminology ‘net zero’. For all words referring to the environment and sustainability, please refer to the UK Green Claims Code: Green claims code: making environmental claims - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) |
| Environmentally friendly Eco-friendly Eco Ecological Bio-friendly Sustainable / sustainability | Avoid the use of these terms without specific verified and / or certified performance data. | Use environment-benefit related terminology only where performance claims are defined in the product information and are traceable to national standards through testing and certification. Please note that an Environmental Performance Declaration (EPD) only reports the impacts of a material, it doesn't guarantee that the product is better for the environment than a product that doesn't have one. |

| Word & phrases to avoid  | Why these should be avoided – explanation  | Acceptable use  |
|---|--|---|
| Green | | <p>Use only to describe the colour of a product.</p> <p>See above – environmental-benefit terminology.</p> <p>Acceptable use would be in widely used phrases such as “Green Space”.</p> |
| Low carbon | <p>Avoid the use of the term without specific verified and / or certified performance data.</p> | <p>The use of comparative claims against other products must be avoided, unless quantifiable published data, traceable to standards and testing, for all construction products in the comparison is used.</p> |
| Non-polluting | <p>Must not be used.</p> | <p>The term non-polluting must never be used as no manufacturer tests a product in all environments (land, air, sea, and fresh water) for sufficient time across all affectable species to be able to make such a claim.</p> <p>Even if they are not directly toxic (arsenic) they may have impacts such as depleting oxygen in water courses (i.e. traditional wallpaper paste sees microbes consuming the starch using dissolved oxygen which then suffocates other aquatic life) or eliminating sunlight or accumulating in the lungs (“inert” concrete / brick dust).</p> |
| Non-toxic / toxic / non-harmful / harmless | <p>Must not be used under REACH/CLP</p> <p>REACH – EC 1907/2006 The Restriction, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals Regulation</p> <p>CLP – EC 1272/2008 The Classification, Labelling & Packaging Regulation</p> | |




| Word & phrases to avoid  | Why these should be avoided – explanation  | Acceptable use  |
|---|---|---|
| Animal-friendly | The term should be avoided without indication or context as to how the product is animal-friendly (see non-toxic above). | Use only where claims relating to animal protection can be substantiated by reliable testing / certification. Claims should be specific, for example non-toxic to mammals or insects. |
| Recyclable | | Use only where the recycling route and any requirements for recycling are documented in the product information. For example, recycle uPVC frames, glass and metal components separately. |
| Recycled | | Use only where there is detail of the content of recycled material included in the product information, verified by relevant certification. For example, packaging made from 50% recycled cardboard and traceable to relevant standards (e.g. ISO14021, ISO14024, UL2809). |
| Circular/circularity | | When talking about the complete life cycle of the product |
| Healthy Buildings | Sick building syndrome (see HSG132 “How to deal with sick building Syndrome (SBS)”) relates to symptoms of illness which may be due to several difficult to verify factors. The term Healthy Building must not be used to imply the construction product creates a Healthy Building in its own right. | Use only where the product contributes to the creation of a healthy building and must be explicit in the construction product’s contribution. For example, the product improves air quality, temperature and humidity control, lighting, or noise in accordance with HSG132 and the contributions are clearly defined in performance terms. |

| Word & phrases to avoid  | Why these should be avoided – explanation  | Acceptable use  |
|--|---|--|
| Fire rated Fire resistant Reaction to fire Flammable / non-flammable | Can be used where they are supported by appropriate test reports or classification data. | Use these terms only where performance claims are traceable to national, European, or international standards through testing and certification for the specific construction product concerned. |
| Self-extinguishing | Can be used where a product contains a retardant- a product containing a retardant | For example, intumescent will char separating oxygen from fuel extinguishing flame. |
| Fire retardant | Can be used a to describe a specific property, typically involving an additive to a product | |
| All other fire claims for individual products or product systems, including: Fire safe Fireproof Flameproof | Avoid the use of these terms without specific certified performance data to known standards or regulatory requirements. | Use fire related terminology only where performance claims are traceable to national, European or international standards through testing and certification for the specific construction product concerned. |
| FIRE: fire performance (product systems) FIRE: fire performance (roof structures) | | Needs quantifying typically by test report (Resistance, Integrity, Insulation) Specific test method applies to roof structures - graded BROOF(T4) to FROOF(T4) |

| Word & phrases to avoid  | Why these should be avoided – explanation  | Acceptable use  |
|---|---|---|
| Heatproof Un-burnable | These are undefined terms and must not be used. | Thermal or insulating properties traceable to national standards may be documented in construction product information. Non-combustible may be used for products tested and meeting non-combustible criteria as detailed in relevant standards (for example, EN-13501-1 class A1). |
| Soundproof | The term soundproof must not be used. | The term soundproofing may be used with details of acoustic and sound reducing / insulating properties. For example, meet the appropriate requirements and standards detailed in Approved Document E of the Building Regulations. |
| Tested Certified Approved | | Only use of these terms with appropriate traceable test certificates. |
| Equivalent to... May be suitable... Risk free | Must not be used. | |
| Easy to install/Easily installed | Must not be used as reliant on user experience. | |

| Word & phrases to avoid  | Why these should be avoided – explanation  | Acceptable use  |
|---|---|--|
| Long-lasting | | Dependent upon context and comparator e.g. Washing Up Liquid, Roofing Slate |
| Semi-rigid | | Dependent upon context and comparator. |
| Can be used... Tailored to... Engineered to... Designed to... Designed to... Formulated to... Comply with... Meets the mechanical performance requirements of... Meets the requirements of... Recommended for... | | Only use these terms with traceable testing and /or certification to appropriate standards. |

| Word & phrases to avoid  | Why these should be avoided – explanation  | Acceptable use  |
|---|---|--|
| Country of origin | | <p>As to Country of Origin, with the exception of products such as slate, stone/aggregate, and timber, most products will be assemblies of several articles.</p> <p>Thus, Country of origin will depend upon the initial source of the total product, the majority of its components, and how much work is involved preparing it for market. For example, a fibre board purchased from Finland would be “Country of Origin Finland”. If the fibre board was used as a raw material e.g. to cut spacer blocks, these would be “Manufactured in (place of cutting)”. If the spacer blocks become a component in a door leaf the door would be “Assembled in (place of assembly)”.</p> <p>When more components or work to create a product comes from a particular country this is the Country of Origin as defined by HMRC.</p> <p>https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-your-goods-meet-the-rules-of-origin</p> |
| Assembled in... | Refers to an activity involving several components. | Must name the country in which the assembly process takes place. |
| Manufactured in... | Refers to the creation of a product or a component. | Must name the country where the product or component of a product are created. |

| Word & phrases to avoid  | Why these should be avoided – explanation  | Acceptable use  |
|--|--|---|
| Dust / Fibre free | Must not use the term 'free' in relation to dust and fibres. | In product information the ability for construction products to release dust and fibrous materials must be defined in relevant circumstances (e.g. cutting, sawing). |
| Weather Resistant | Must not be used. | See below for alternative terms, such as, waterproof or water resistant. |
| Waterproof Water resistant Water repellent Damp / Dampproof Moisture tolerant / Moisture resistant Wind proof UV resistant | Avoid the use of these terms without specific performance data verified through testing to known standards or regulatory requirements. | Use weather / environment resistance terminology only where performance claims are traceable to testing and / or certification for the specific construction product concerned, where appropriate national standards and / or regulatory requirements must be referenced. |
| Light-weight / lightweight | | Dependent upon context and comparator. |
| Resistant Resistant: Abrasion, Chemical, Cut, UV, Weather | | Needs quantifying by test report. Need quantifying typically by test report or classification e.g. PPE Gloves. |
| Impact Resistance | Avoid the use of this term without specific performance data verified through testing to known standards or regulatory requirements. | Only use this term with traceable testing and / or certification to appropriate standards. |

| Word & phrases to avoid  | Why these should be avoided – explanation  | Acceptable use  |
|---|---|---|
| Durable / Durability / Resistance to wear / Abrasion / Long-lasting | | Use the terms durable or durability only where performance claims are traceable to testing and / or certification for the specific construction product concerned. |
| General adjectives: Cutting edge Innovative Next generation Market leading Revolutionary Robust State of the art Better Greater Improved Superior Generally Safe / Safer Traditional Typically Unique | Use these terms with extreme caution as they are inherently ambiguous and misleading. | Where general adjectives are used to enhance a product description, product information must include justification for the use of the claim. For example, you may only say your product is innovative where the feature has never been used before in a similar construction product. |

| Word & phrases to avoid  | Why these should be avoided – explanation  | Acceptable use  |
|---|---|--|
| Statements of known performance e.g. Broof(t4) | May only be used with a traceable certificate of performance for a specific construction product. | Use of certified performance claims must comply with relevant Trade Association rules and / or regulation. |



Please direct any comments or suggested additions to
enquiries@cpicode.org.uk