



FSC and Printed Materials

This factsheet is for companies and individuals who want to use FSC certified paper or board for their printed materials or packaging.

Global paper consumption has increased by almost half since 1980¹ and the UK is the fifth largest producer of printed products in the world². Ensuring that you use responsibly sourced paper and board is therefore of vital importance to the world's forests.

What is FSC?

FSC helps take care of forests and the people and wildlife who call them home. The FSC system enables you to demonstrate that the paper products that you sell or use come from well-managed forests and/or verified and recycled sources.



FSC certification tracks forest products from the forest through each stage of processing, conversion, distribution and printing. In order for the final product to carry an FSC label, every stage must be covered by FSC certification.

Using FSC Certified Papers and Boards

FSC certified papers and boards are widely available and most carry either an FSC Mix or an FSC Recycled claim. FSC Mix products can contain a mix of virgin and recycled fibre and may also include limited amounts of controlled

wood, which has been risk assessed to avoid undesirable sources. FSC Recycled products are made using verified reclaimed materials.

Using an FSC Certified Printer

Printed materials and packaging can only carry an FSC label if they are produced and labelled under a valid FSC Chain of Custody (CoC) certificate. To check FSC certificates you can use the FSC international database: <http://info.fsc.org/>.

To ensure your printed materials carry an FSC label you should:

- Use an FSC certified printer.
- Specify FSC certified materials from the outset and request that the printer apply the appropriate FSC label.
- Ensure any supplementary text about FSC is approved by the printer's certification body.

Why is it important to apply the FSC label and specify FSC from suppliers?

Specifying FSC materials and asking your printer to apply an FSC label to them, gives your customers an assurance that your business has chosen to source responsibly. It can also enhance Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy and increase credibility with stakeholders, governments, NGOs and the general public.

The FSC Labels

The FSC label is generally printed directly onto the packaging or printed materials and is not usually a sticky label. FSC labels can be shown in positive and negative green, or black and white, and can be either landscape or portrait orientation.



Left is an example of a full FSC product label. Portrait versions of the full label must be produced at a minimum width of 17mm, and the landscape versions at a minimum height of 12mm.

Right is an example of an FSC mini label. Portrait versions of the mini label must be produced at a minimum width of 11mm, and the landscape versions at a minimum height of 8mm.



Full Label

It is possible to produce both the full and mini FSC label in alternative colours, but this will require a special approval from your printer's certification body. The use of the FSC trademarks must be approved by the certification body of the company applying the label.

Mini Label

The use of the smaller 'mini label' may be specially approved when applied to paper items that are A5 or smaller, packaging that is 500ml in volume or less, or where clear, unprinted space is limited.

The FSC Brandmark

Help us to share the true value of forests in all our lives by adding the FSC Forests For All Forever brandmark to your printed materials, in addition to the FSC label. Contact your printer to request it.



In order to have an FSC label applied to your printed materials, your printer must be FSC certified.

Text-only claims such as 'Printed on FSC certified paper' are not permitted under the FSC Trademark Standard. An FSC label must be used and only an FSC certified printer can apply this.

FAQs

Q: Do I have to hold FSC certification to have the FSC logo on my packaging or printed materials?

A: No, but your printer must be FSC certified and will normally need to source the FSC certified paper/board on your behalf.

Q: I don't hold FSC certification but have purchased finished and labelled FSC printed materials. Can I use the FSC trademarks to promote them?

A: Yes, however you would need to apply for an FSC Trademark Licence. This licence would enable you to use the FSC trademarks to promote them, off-product, directly to end-consumers. If however, your customers are specifying FSC and need you to make an FSC claim through your invoices, you would need to be FSC certified.

Q: My printer is FSC certified, does this mean that all of their paper is FSC certified?

A: Not necessarily, you should always specify in your order that you wish to buy an FSC product and state that you would like the label added.

Q: Our organisation's procurement policy states that we must source FSC printed materials and be able to verify this. How is this achieved?

An FSC certified printer can issue an invoice to you which will include the FSC claim for each item and their FSC certificate code.