



Designation: D 5488 – 94d^{ε1}

AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR TESTING AND MATERIALS
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Standard Terminology of Environmental Labeling of Packaging Materials and Packages¹

This standard is issued under the fixed designation D 5488; the number immediately following the designation indicates the year of original adoption or, in the case of revision, the year of last revision. A number in parentheses indicates the year of last reapproval. A superscript epsilon (ε) indicates an editorial change since the last revision or reapproval.

^{ε1} NOTE—The term “biodegradable” was corrected editorially in June 1995.

1. Scope

1.1 This standard establishes definitions for labeling of packaging materials and packages which communicate environmental attributes to consumers, users, or both. These definitions will include consideration of the production, use, and disposal of packaging materials and packages. (For a definition of packages, see Terminology D 996).

2. Referenced Documents

2.1 ASTM Standards:

D 996 Terminology of Packaging and Distribution Environments²

3. Terminology

3.1 **available program**, *n*—a qualifying term which can be used in the definition of recyclable, reusable, refillable, returnable, compostable, establishing limits; for example by population and access within geographic area.

3.1.1 DISCUSSION—This term is an essential component of recyclable, reusable, refillable, returnable, and compostable. Manufacturers should refer to FTC Guidelines to ensure claims are not deceptive. Claims should be qualified with appropriate phrases such as the following:

“Recyclable where facilities exist. Check to see if recycling facilities exist in your community.”

“Recyclable where facilities exist. Collection programs have been established in x% of the country. Check to determine if they exist in your community.”

“Compostable in centralized facilities. Check to see if composting programs exist in your community.”

“Compostable at home. May be composted in as part of your composting pile at home.”

3.2 **biodegradable**, *adj*—capable of undergoing decomposition into carbon dioxide, methane, water, inorganic compounds, or biomass in which the predominant mechanism is the enzymatic action of micro-organisms, that can be measured by

standardized tests, in a specified period of time, reflecting available disposal conditions.

3.3 **compaction ratio**, *n*—the measurement of the relationship of volume displacement of a package before and after simulated landfill conditions as determined in standardized tests.

3.4 **compostable**, *adj*—capable of undergoing biological decomposition in a compost site as part of an available program, such that the material (that is, feedstock) is not visually distinguishable and breaks down to carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass, at a rate consistent with known compostable materials.

3.4.1 DISCUSSION—See **available program** for further clarification. Also, manufacturers should indicate if composting at home or centralized facility is appropriate.

3.5 **equivalent product**, *n*—provides the same amount of product or number of recommended uses as contained in the package being replaced (as related to Subcommittee D10.46 package source reduction).

3.6 **package source reduction**, *n*—the reduction of the weight or volume of the packaging materials used in a package containing an equivalent product.

3.7 **photodegradable**, *adj*—capable of undergoing a significant loss of properties that can be measured by standardized tests after exposure to representative amounts of sunlight.

3.8 **recyclable**, *adj*—capable of being removed, separated, or diverted from the solid waste stream in an available program, established by, but not limited to, manufacturers, retailers, or municipalities; processed and returned to use in the form of raw materials or products.

3.8.1 DISCUSSION—See **available program** for further clarification.

3.9 **recycled**, *adj*—diverted, separated, or removed from the solid waste stream, processed and returned to use in the form of raw materials or products.

3.10 **recycled content**, *n*—the percent of a packaging material that is composed of recycled material.

3.11 **refillable**, *adj*—intended to be refilled for its original purpose one or more times in an available program established by, but not limited to, manufacturers, distributors, or retailers.

3.11.1 DISCUSSION—See **available program** and **reusable** for further clarification.

¹ This terminology is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee D-10 on Packaging and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee D10.46 on Environmental Labeling.

Current edition approved Dec. 15, 1994. Published February 1995. Originally published as D 5488 – 93. Last previous edition D 5488 – 94c.

² Annual Book of ASTM Standards, Vol 15.09.