

# WATER QUALITY ASSOCIATION LITERATURE AND GOLD SEAL POLICY

Gold Seal Product Certification

## Introduction

The WQA Gold Seal identifies products that have undergone the certification process and are currently certified and listed by the WQA Gold Seal Certification Program.

Clients who have products currently certified and have received written confirmation from WQA to use the WQA Gold Seal Mark may use it in accordance with the labeling requirements in this policy. The most current certified product listings can be viewed on WQA's website at [www.wqa.org](http://www.wqa.org).

WQA does not authorize any organization outside the Water Quality Association to use the Gold Seal.

All advertising, promotional material, literature, and packaging used with a WQA Certified product must adhere to the Water Quality Association Gold Seal Logo Policies. Any use of the Gold Seal on any product, advertising, webpage, etc., controlled by the certifying client, may be subject to review and approval by WQA.

The WQA Member Logo shall not be used on any product or product literature at any time but may be used in advertising if the certifying client is also a member of WQA.

## Ownership & Registration of the Gold Seal Marks

WQA and its Gold Seal Marks are registered trademarks of the Water Quality Association. The Marks are registered in the United States, Canada, Korea, Taiwan, Australia, Brazil, India, and Mexico. The laws of each country protect the usage of the WQA Marks.

Ownership and control of the Gold Seal Registered Mark used or applied, whether purchased or authorized, is with WQA.

## Liability

WQA must preserve and protect the integrity and prestige of the WQA Gold Seal Mark. Any deviation from these guidelines regarding the use of the Mark can confuse and damage the Water Quality Association's reputation.

In the event these guidelines are violated, WQA retains the right to direct the user to cease use of the WQA Gold Seal Mark, and may sue to enjoin misuse by any user, whether WQA Certified or not, member or non-member of the association, to recover actual and punitive damages. It is the right of WQA to determine whether these guidelines have been violated or whether the Gold Seal Mark has been misused.

## Gold Seal Mark Certifications

The Gold Seal Marks can be either white with black or gold with black lettering, as seen below. There are no restrictions on the size of the Gold Seal; however, the lettering must be legible, and any variations of the logo design, including alternate colors, must be pre-approved by the WQA Gold Seal Product Certification Department.

Digitized logo art is available upon request. All versions have country code indicators for Canadian 'c' and the United States 'US' markets. The Canadian version of the mark is required for sale in Canada.

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Table 1: Gold Seal Marks



The following Mark-specific requirements also apply:

**On the Gold Seal with the words “Water Quality Association” in the center circle:**

- The words “TESTED AND CERTIFIED” shall appear across the top of the Seal.
- The words “UNDER INDUSTRY STANDARDS” shall appear across the bottom of the Seal.
- For use on products that will be sold in Canada, a small “c” shall appear at the 8 o’clock position.

**On the Gold Seal with “WQA” in the center circle:**

- The words “TESTED & CERTIFIED” shall appear across the top of the Seal.
- The words “INDEPENDENTLY” shall appear across the bottom of the Seal.
- For use on products that will be sold in Canada, a small “c” shall appear at the 8 o’clock position.

**Proper Use of the WQA Gold Seal and Conformance Statement**

General Requirements for the Use of the WQA Gold Seal on Certified Products

WQA requires that all Certified products use the Gold Seal Mark to identify that a product is Certified unless it is physically impossible or otherwise authorized by WQA. When it is physically impossible, the Gold Seal Mark should be used on a document such as a bill of lading or a performance data sheet. Products authorized not to bear the Gold Seal Mark in any form shall have a listing note under each applicable standard to indicate that this requirement has been waived.

The Gold Seal Mark shall be used only on Certified products produced at WQA-authorized locations. The Gold Seal may not be used deceptively or misleadingly such that it suggests, implies, or states certification for any product or claim that is not certified.

**Company Name Requirements**

The company under which the product(s) are listed on the WQA website must be identified in the literature.

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### *Claims*

When performance claims are cited in literature, the Gold Seal may be used if the claims are certified. Uncertified claims need to be delineated from the Gold Seal. For more information on the delineation of claims, please see the "Claim Delineation" section further down in this policy. Please refer to WQA schemes for further details on systems certified only for material safety and/or structural integrity.

### *Potentially Misleading Statements*

Misleading statements shall not be placed on any product packaging or literature. Statements of performance claims shall conform to the requirements of this policy:

- **Remove vs. Reduce:** Remove implies 100% reduction. Because it is impossible to guarantee a 100% reduction for any single contaminant, there are two options available:
  - When stating that the product *removes* a specific contaminant, also state the percent removal as verified by test data in the same sentence. For example, "Product ABC will remove up to 99% chlorine. See performance data sheet for details."
  - Use the word "reduce" rather than "remove." For example, "Product ABC reduces chlorine, VOC, and Cyst. See performance data sheet for details."
- **Absolute Statements:** Statements such as "Product ABC removes all organic contaminants" are unacceptable. All absolute statements must be clearly defined as to the terms they apply. For example, a statement such as "All organic contaminants, as tested through the VOC surrogate and as listed on the performance data sheet, are *reduced* by the percentages shown" is acceptable.
- **Herbicides and Pesticides:** General comments that a system that reduces herbicides and pesticides cannot be used. Instead, reference to the specific contaminants must be made. The connection may be made by stating, "see performance data sheet for specific herbicides reduced."
- **Implied Health Claims:** Independent studies cannot be referenced to imply that exposure to certain contaminants your system reduces will result in higher disease incidences.

### *Unique Trade Designations for Certified Products*

Each Certified product shall have a unique trade designation stated on the Certified product. The Company shall not have the same trade designation but may have the same brand name for Certified and non-certified products.

### *Dealers, Distributors, and Re-packagers*

Dealers, distributors, or re-packagers wishing to use the Gold Seal must either identify the listed company and listed trade designation as it appears on the WQA website or obtain their own certification through WQA. Certified customers must inform any dealers, retailers, distributors, etc., of the rules and guidelines for the proper use of the Gold Seal mark. Certification does not "transfer" to sellers unless WQA approves.

### *The Use of Asterisks/Superscripts/Footnotes*

Asterisks/superscripts/footnotes may be used to allow for clarification of statements that are made on product packaging or literature. An asterisk/superscript does not need to be on the same page/side of the product as its reference. The use of asterisks shall follow these parameters:

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- Asterisks/superscripts/footnotes shall be legible.
- Asterisks shall refer to the footnote location if not on the same panel.
- The language referenced by the asterisks/superscript shall be relevant.
- Each footnote indicator shall be unique unless they share the same footnote reference.

### *Template Literature*

WQA allows manufacturers to produce templates of literature pieces. These templates are usually used in a family of products when the only difference between pieces is the trade designation. Templates can be used to meet WQA literature and Gold Seal requirements, thereby avoiding unnecessary reviews of the same piece of literature.

### **Marking of Products**

The customer shall submit documentation indicating how the product will be marked as certified (product, product label, product packaging, data plate, a print line, bill of lading, etc.). The product or product literature shall be marked with the following:

- WQA Mark ([See Table 1](#))
  - WQA Mark shall be legible
  - If the product(s) are shipped in bulk, they are exempt from using the Mark on the bulk shipment packaging. In these cases, the WQA Gold Seal Mark, Company name or identification, brand name, or designation shown in the official listing shall appear on the bill of lading or another document shipped with the product.
- WQA Conformance Statement Placement
  - The conformance statement shall have the complete standard name listed (E.g., NSF/ANSI/CAN 61)
  - The conformance statement shall be directly next to/immediately adjacent to the Gold Seal for Data Plates (labels), Manuals, and Performance Data Sheets.
- WQA Conformance Statement Claims
  - Only certified claims shall be included in the conformance statement.
  - If any performance-based contaminant reduction claim or statement indicating suitability for use in another company's system is not certified, the Conformance Statement must be directly next to/immediately adjacent to the Gold Seal Mark, and the uncertified claim needs to be delineated (see Claim Delineation below).
- Company name as specified on the official listing.
- Product Name or Trade Designation as specified on the official listing.

All literature requiring review shall be defined by the certification standard(s) for which the product is certified.

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**WATER QUALITY ASSOCIATION LITERATURE AND GOLD SEAL POLICY**

**Table 2: Required Literature**

<b>Literature Required to be Reviewed by the Certifier per Standard Product Types</b>			
	<b>CERTIFIED DWTU SYSTEMS</b> (or where the replacement element data plate serves as the system data plate)	<b>DWTU CERTIFIED COMPONENTS &amp; REPLACEMENT ELEMENTS</b> (for use in Certified Systems)	<b>NON-DWTU SYSTEMS AND COMPONENTS</b>
<b>Product Manuals</b>	Approval required	Required if applicable under standard <sup>2</sup>	Required if applicable under standard <sup>2</sup>
<b>Performance Data Sheets</b>	Approval required	Literature Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Literature Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>
<b>Data Plates</b>	Approval required	Literature Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>	Literature Not Applicable <sup>1</sup>
<b>Packaging</b>	Required if applicable under standard <sup>2</sup>	Required if applicable under standard <sup>2</sup>	Required if applicable under standard <sup>2</sup>
<b>Bill of Lading</b>	Required only if not meeting the above requirements <sup>3</sup>	Required only if not meeting the above requirements <sup>3</sup>	Required only if not meeting the above requirements <sup>3</sup>
<b>Certificates of Analysis/Conformance</b>	Required only if not meeting the above requirements <sup>3</sup>	Required only if not meeting the above requirements <sup>3</sup>	Required only if not meeting the above requirements <sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> While these pieces of literature are typically not associated with replacement elements or components, if they do exist for such products, they can be evaluated by WQA to determine if they comply with this policy and the standards.




<sup>2</sup> Certain standards require product packaging.

<sup>3</sup> Bills of lading and certificates of analysis/conformance only require WQA approval if they are utilized in place of the typical literature needed to meet the standard requirements.

**Conformance Statement**

The Gold Seal Mark (any approved Marks from [Table 1](#)) shall appear as specified in [Table 3](#) or [Table 4](#) below.

**Table 3: Drinking Water Treatment Unit (DWTU) System Conformance Statement Examples**

<b>COMPLETE DWTU SYSTEMS</b>	<b>REPLACEMENT ELEMENTS</b>	<b>DWTU COMPONENTS</b>
		 <b>COMPONENT</b>
System Certified by WQA to <i>(insert appropriate Standard and number)</i> for the reduction of _____.	Certified by WQA to <i>(insert appropriate Standard and number)</i> when used in <i>(name of the certified system)</i> for the reduction of _____.	This <i>(name of component)</i> is tested and certified by WQA to <i>(insert appropriate Standard and number)</i> for material (and structural integrity if it applies) requirement(s) only.

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Examples of acceptable marking for DWTU Systems are shown in Table 3 and shall include the following information:

Complete Systems Examples:

1. *(insert trade designation)* Certified by the Water Quality Association according to *(insert appropriate Standard(s))* for the reduction of *(list contaminants)*.
2. *(insert trade designation)* Certified by the Water Quality Association according to *(insert appropriate Standard(s))*; see performance data sheet for specific claims.

DWTU Component Examples:

1. For components tested for structural integrity, the words “for material and structural integrity requirements only.”
2. For components that have not been tested for structural integrity, the words “for material requirements only.”

### *Packaging*

The packaging of Certified treatment units must comply with one of the following options:

- The Gold Seal Mark does not have to be used on the Certified product’s packaging. No performance claims can be stated if the Gold Seal Mark is not displayed on the company’s packaging.
- The Gold Seal Mark can be displayed on the Certified product’s packaging without stating individual or specific performance claims. Suppose product(s) packaging contains individual or specific performance claims. In that case, the Gold Seal Mark must be displayed on the product packaging along with all the required marking statements listed in the program-specific sections of the policies.

### *Replacement Element Data Plates*

Where replacement element data plates serve as the system data plate, and the replacement element fits into a head, the head shall be labeled with a trade designation to ensure that the correct replacement element is used with the correct head.

### *Use of the WQA Gold Seal Mark on Drinking Water Treatment Unit (DWTU) Components*

Components certified by the WQA shall bear the word “COMPONENT” under the Gold Seal Mark. This wording is required to prevent confusion between Certified systems and Certified components.


- If a component is certified to only a portion of a system standard, it must state “COMPONENT” under the Gold Seal Mark.
- If a component is certified to only a portion of a system standard and a complete section of a component standard (e.g, NSF/ANSI/CAN 61), the component statement or the word “COMPONENT” will not be required. Still, in the Company’s system web listing, WQA will note that it was certified as a component.

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Table 4: Drinking Water Treatment Unit (DWTU) System Conformance Statement Examples

OPTION 1	OPTION 2
	<p>NSF/ANSI(/CAN) XX by WQA</p>
<p><i>(name of component)</i> is tested and certified by WQA against (insert appropriate standard number <i>and section if desired</i>).</p>	<p>This can be used with or without the Gold Seal (A listing note shall be added to the listing if the Gold Seal is not used.)</p>

### Point-of-Entry (POE) Systems for NSF/ANSI/CAN 61

Point-of-entry systems conforming to the materials safety requirements of NSF/ANSI/CAN 61 and not certified for drinking water contaminant reduction performance must use the Gold Seal Mark for complete functional systems in Table 3, with the statement that the product is not certified for contaminant reduction or structural integrity.

### Drinking Water Chemicals for NSF/ANSI/CAN 60

Standard NSF/ANSI/CAN 60 requires the use of the certifier’s mark on the product.

### Products Certified for NSF/ANSI/CAN 372

NSF/ANSI/CAN 372 statements can claim “Lead-Free,” “Lead-Free Compliance,” or “Low Lead.”

## Claims and Claim Delineation

### Uncertified Claims

WQA requires that any uncertified claims be delineated from the Gold Seal Certification Mark. The following are examples of uncertified claims:

1. Performance/reduction claims on a system certified to a Drinking Water Treatment Unit standard, but only some of the claims are included in the certification.
2. Performance/reduction claims on a system certified to NSF/ANSI/CAN 61 and/or NSF/ANSI/CAN 372 only.
3. Performance/reduction claims being made on a component certified to a Drinking Water Treatment Unit standard for materials safety and structural integrity only. If the component is also a replacement element evaluated for use within a certified system, certified performance claims can be made in accordance with the standard requirements.

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### Fits Claims

Claims that the product fits into another company's system.

1. These claims should always be delineated as per this example. "This filter has not been tested or certified by WQA for use in [competitor's name] system."

### Acceptable Delineation Examples

The following examples are acceptable means to differentiate Gold Seal Program Certified claims and non-Gold Seal-related claims in advertising and product(s) literature.

1. Making a statement that WQA did not evaluate the claim.
2. Statements that the claim is based on manufacturer, independent, or third-party test data.

All statements delineating and differentiating certified and uncertified claims must appear in clear and conspicuous typeface and print size. The statements must either be next to the uncertified claim or include a reference, such as a footnote, to where the delineation is being made. The delineation statement must include the flow rate and capacity at which the model was tested.

Uncertified claims need to be delineated each time they are made. If the Gold Seal is used on a website, delineation of uncertified claims must appear not only on the page where the Gold Seal is present, but also on any page for the same product accessible from the main page.

### WQA Tested, Uncertified Claims

In some cases, a customer may test a product but not use that test data to support certification. The following gives guidance on how to reference the WQA testing in product literature:

1. The customer can make a WQA-tested claim on a product if the Gold Seal is not present and the product is not certified to any standard by WQA.
2. The customer can make a WQA-tested claim on a certified product if the claim is not covered by any standard that is part of WQA's scope of certification.

NOTE: For tested but not certified claims within the scope of a standard, an "Independently tested" claim can be made. Example: A product certified to NSF/ANSI/CAN 372 and tested for chlorine reduction under NSF/ANSI 42 cannot reference WQA as the testing body in its literature. Instead, the company can state that the product was independently or third-party tested for chlorine reduction.

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## Authorization for Use of the WQA Gold Seal Mark

The Gold Seal is used to identify those products that have undergone the certification process and are currently certified by the WQA Gold Seal Certification Program.

Companies with certified products that have received written confirmation from WQA to use the Gold Seal Mark may use it in accordance with the labeling requirements in this policy. The most current certified product listings can be viewed on WQA's website at [www.wqa.org](http://www.wqa.org).

Companies that are Members of WQA but do not have any products certified in the Gold Seal program cannot use the WQA Gold Seal Mark.

The WQA Member Logo shall not be used on any product or product literature.

The Certification department evaluates all products according to industry standards and WQA Gold Seal Certification Policies and Schemes. Suppose the product complies with the applicable industry standard(s), WQA Certification Policies, and Schemes. In that case, it will be certified, listed in the Gold Seal Program, and approved to use the Gold Seal Mark.

Contaminant reduction claims can be made for entire systems, depending on the specific industry standard and whether the product complies with it. However, these claims SHALL NOT be applied to certified components outside the system with which that component has been certified for such claims.

Written authorization to use the Gold Seal Mark is sent to the company of a Certified product when the Gold Seal Certification department has completed its evaluation of the product and has listed it at [www.wqa.org](http://www.wqa.org). The approved literature and Gold Seal Certificate will be housed on the Customer Portal.

The Gold Seal Mark may not be used to show that products are "pending certification" or are "in the process" of obtaining certification. Only products listed on the website can bear the WQA Gold Seal Mark, subject to the limitations of this policy.

Possession of a Gold Seal Certificate or approved literature does not exclusively authorize a company to use the Gold Seal Mark. If a company does not comply with all WQA Policies and "use" restrictions of the Gold Seal, the WQA certificate is no longer valid.

No Company or person shall apply or use a Mark in connection with a product or represent in any way that the product is Certified until authorization to mark the product is obtained.

## Repercussions of Using the Gold Seal Mark on a Non-Certified Product

Companies using the Gold Seal Mark on a non-certified product(s) will be instructed to cease and desist use of the Mark on the product(s) not certified by WQA. For a second occurrence within two (2) years, WQA may withdraw Certification for all company products. WQA may also take other appropriate enforcement action.

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*What "Authorization" to use the Gold Seal Mark means:*

- The WQA Gold Seal Certification department's evaluation has found a representative sample of said system or component to be in conformance with a specific industry standard.
- Only the trade designation and contaminant claims listed under the said company on the WQA website are Certified and are authorized to be used in association with the WQA Gold Seal Mark.
- That the WQA Gold Seal can be used in the literature reviewed and approved by WQA.
- After "Authorization" is granted, not all applications of the Gold Seal need to be reviewed and approved by WQA. Any use of the WQA Gold Seal must meet the requirements of this policy.
- Indicates the product, and only the product is certified. The certification does not transfer to the company as a whole or any of its distributors.

**Internet Policy**

WQA recognizes the internet as a viable method for meeting literature requirements. Therefore, the following requirements apply to all pieces of product literature and advertising on the internet:

- The standard requires certain pieces of product literature to be available. The following requirements shall be included in the product or its literature. All other requirements may be downloadable or viewable from a manufacturer's website if that website or a QR Code is referenced on the product or product literature.
  - Company Name as listed on the WQA website
  - Data Plate
  - Trade designation
  - A reference to the certifying company's website
- If a company uses the internet to meet literature or Gold Seal requirements, all WQA Gold Seal literature and mark requirements apply. The company shall keep all required standard information (e.g., Manuals, Performance Data Sheets) available on its websites even after the product has been withdrawn from the market.
- Any use of the Gold Seal on any webpage controlled by the certifying company may be subject to review by WQA.

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**Appendix A: Example Violations**

VIOLATION	REASON FOR VIOLATION	VIOLATION CORRECTION
Company A is a member of the WQA Association and does not have certified products. But Company A has the WQA Gold Seal and member logo on their products and website.	Company A must be certified by WQA to use the Gold Seal mark. Member logos <b>cannot</b> be placed on products.	Company A has the WQA Member Logo on its website only.
Company A has a trade designation certified by WQA. Their literature states, "All products from company A are certified by the Water Quality Association."	Only certified product trade designations can bear the WQA Gold Seal.	[Trade designation] is certified by the Water Quality Association
[Trade designation] reduces herbicide and pesticide use by up to 99%.	Blanket statements of removal or reduction must be accompanied by references to actual test data, such as the performance data sheet.	[Trade designation] reduces herbicide and pesticide use by up to 99%. <i>*See performance data sheet for details.</i>
Company A sells [name of product] to Company B. Company B sells [name of product] on its website and claims the product is manufactured by Company B and that the product is certified by WQA.	Certified companies must be listed on the WQA website. Only approved companies can claim certification through WQA.	Company B <u>may</u> use the Gold Seal logo <u>if</u> Company B indicates that [name of product] is manufactured by Company A and certified through WQA by Company A.
Company A certified a product at WQA at a specific time, but the product listing is no longer found on the WQA website. Company A still has the Gold Seal on products and their website.	Certification is not a one-time event but a process that must be maintained. Any company not listed on the WQA website violates WQA policy and is liable for legal action.	The Gold Seal must be removed immediately from all referenced areas.

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