

## **STeP by OEKO-TEX®: New regulations in 2022**

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At the start of the year, the OEKO-TEX® Association as usual updates the applicable test criteria, limit values and requirements for its range of certifications and labels.

### **Lifecycle assessment solution – The Impact Calculator**

To achieve the industry's 2030 goal, companies need reliable data. To promote progress and data exchange along the global supply chain, OEKO-TEX® has launched the Impact Calculator. The tool measures the carbon and water footprint of each process step, the overall process and one kilogram of material/product.

OEKO-TEX® recognized the need for action and started development of a life cycle assessment tool in 2020. Now, both carbon and water footprint calculations are integrated into the STeP by OEKO-TEX® facility certification. Thus, the certification enables STeP certified facilities to:

- Identify the largest carbon and water impacts by materials used or produced, as well as by production processes.
- Take action to improve operations and meet reduction targets.
- Share carbon and water footprint data with customers, investors, business partners and other stakeholders.

The use of the Impact Calculator for STeP customers is free of charge. The tool will be accessible to STeP customers in the STeP section on the myOEKO-TEX® platform from January 10, 2022.

Due to increased sustainability requirements in the market, we see the need to reinforce our sustainability criteria in below modules. The following new regulations for STeP by OEKO-TEX® come into effect on April 1, 2022 after a three-month transition period:

**New Exclusion Criteria in STeP Standard in Annex 10**

**Environmental Performance:**

4.2.1 Purpose

The environmental performance of the facility shall be considered at all times and particular attention shall be paid to specific issues and objectives, that are listed under Chapter "4.2.1" in the Standard

4.2.11 Prevention of accidental events that affect the environment

A dedicated facility emergency response team, which deals with all chemical and environmental pollution incidents, shall be assigned and trained regularly.

**Environmental and Energy Management:**

4.3.10.1 Performing an environmental assessment

The facility shall have procedures for recording all legal, regulatory and other policy requirements relating to the environmental aspects of the activities, products and services.

**Social Responsibility:**

4.4.10 Grievance Mechanism

The facility shall implement a formal communication system that includes an internal grievance system with a procedure where workers can communicate their complaints to the responsible person within the facility (e.g. complaints box). The system shall include corrective actions describing types of complaints, analysis, remediation and actions taken.

4.4.10 Grievance Mechanism

Additionally to the internal grievance mechanism the facility shall provide a mechanism to all workers where they can communicate their complaints externally.

#### 4.4.3 Social Responsibility Management System

An internal list of all officially submitted complaints and their solutions/corrective measures shall be in place.

#### 4.4.12 Harassment and abuse

An anonymous complaints system for eliminating harassment and abuse shall be in place. A designated trusted person shall be made available to review anonymous complaints from workers.

#### 4.4.8 Employment relationship

Employees including subcontracted workers and home workers shall receive a written employment contract.

### **Quality Management:**

#### 4.5.10 Risk Management

A risk assessment shall be carried out in regular intervals.

### **Health and Safety:**

#### 4.6.2.7 Heat stress (workplace conditions)

If there is any risk related to heat stress in hot environments, measures shall be defined and introduced in the form of adequate clothing, regulated working hours with defined breaks, ventilation of rooms and, if possible, air conditioning of rooms.

#### 4.6.3.2 Incidents

Emergency and evacuation training sessions shall be held every three years at minimum.

#### 4.6.3.2. Incidents

Emergency equipment shall be inspected annually to ensure that it is functional and freely accessible all times

#### 4.6.5 Records/documentation

The management shall define and document a chart of all the employees responsible for health and safety that identifies at least the following positions: department manager, health and safety manager, person responsible for emergencies, fire extinguishing equipment and first aid, operational health and safety physician and the workers' representative for operational health and safety.

#### 4.6.4 Risk assessment

The identification of risks in the area of health and safety serves the overall safety of the facility and highlights the areas in which safety measures must be taken and reinforced. Potential aspects that shall be considered of a risk assessment are defined in 4.6.4.

#### 4.6.6. Compliance

The facility shall establish a procedure for identifying and assessing the applicable legal and other health and safety requirements, as well as periodically assess the compliance with these requirements.

### **New Substance Additions to the STeP by OEKO-TEX® C chemical List in Annex 3:**

MRSL Group: 4. Hazardous colorants

If Michlers Ketone/Base is present than more than  $\geq 0.1$  %:

- C.I. Solvent Blue 4 (CAS 6786-83-0) - no testing required for wastewater
- C.I. Solvent Violet 8 (CAS 561-41-1) - no testing required for wastewater
- C.I. Basic Violet 3 (CAS 548-62-9) - testing required for wastewater

**Reason:** The substances were added to the list of SVHCs and might be found in textile and leather chemicals

MRS� Group: 13. Surfactants, wetting agents (other than APEO's)

- EDTA (CAS 60-00-4) changed to "various"

**Reason:** more CAS numbers can be represented

MRS� Group: 14. Other substances

- Bisphenol B (P) (CAS 77-40-7)

Reason: The substance was added to the list of SVHCs and might be found in textile and leather chemicals

MRS� Group: 14. Other substances

- Addition of footnote to titanium dioxide (TiO<sub>2</sub>) for particles of respirable size (CAS 1317-70-0; 1317-80-2)
- Particles of respirable size are prevalent if  $\geq 1\%$  w/w of particles within the powder have a size of  $< 10 \mu\text{m}$

### **STeP Limit Values for Wastewater Testing**

Some limit values for facilities with direct discharge are getting a bit more stringent. The transition period to fulfill the new limit values will be until 2023.

**Reason:** ease the process for our customers and work towards an industry alignment we successfully updated the limits for wastewater testing in collaboration with ZDHC.

**Adapted limit values for wastewater effluents – direct discharge in Annex 5 (5.1)**

Parameter			Minimum	Advanced Fortschrittlich	Excellent Hervorragend
Colour / spectral absorption coefficient at ....	436 nm	m-1	7	5	2
	525 nm	m-1	5	3	1
	620 nm	m-1	3	2	1
Biochemical oxygen demand BOD5 (as O2)		mg/l	30	15	5
Phosphor total as P		mg/l	3	0.5	0.1
Total suspended solids		mg/l	50	25	10
Coliform		[bacteria/100ml]	400	100	25
Cyanide		mg/l	0.2	0.1	0.05
Sulphides (as S2)		mg/l	0.5	0.25	0.1
Sulfite		mg/l	2	1	0.2

**MRSL Parameter listed in Annex 3**

Substance	CAS No.	MRSL	Wastewater		Sludge	
			Limit Values	Reporting Limit	Limit Values	Reporting Limit
Antimony (Sb)	7440-36-0 et al.	X	100	1	Testing required	2
Silver (Ag)	7440-22-4 et al.	X	100	1	Testing required	2

**New wastewater sampling points defined in the STeP Standard in Annex 5:**

To ease the process for our customers and work towards an industry alignment we successfully updated the sampling points for wastewater testing in collaboration with ZDHC

- Sampling points are now defined in the Standard under 5.1.1 and 5.2.1. and aligned with the requirements of ZDHC
- The sampling point for facilities, with direct and indirect discharge, will be different and are aligned with ZDHC. The testing parameter remain the same.

For more information on the new OEKO-TEX® test criteria, please contact OEKO-TEX® ([info@oeko-tex.com](mailto:info@oeko-tex.com)) or your responsible OEKO-TEX® Institute ([www.oeko-tex.com/institutes](http://www.oeko-tex.com/institutes)).



*After a three-month transition period, the new STeP by OEKO-TEX® regulations will become binding on April 1, 2022.*