Oeko • Tex
Association

# Questions & Answers

## on Oeko-Tex Standard 100

CONFIDENCE IN TEXTILES
Tested for harmful substances
according to Oeko-Tex Standard 100
Test-No. 00-0000 BTTG Manchester

# Feel great safely

Since 1992, the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 has become an international benchmark for safety all along the textile chain.

Today, over 6000 companies in the textile and clothing industry around the world are involved in the Oeko-Tex certification network.

With over 45,000 certificates issued for millions of textile products, the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 has become the leading label for textiles that have been screened for harmful substances.

The Oeko-Tex system assures that textiles which have been tested successfully and awarded a certificate are free of concentrations of harmful substances which are detrimental to health.

For a summary of the main purposes and aims of the Oeko-Tex Standard 100, please find below 16 frequently asked questions and our responses.

All kinds of documents, the latest list of criteria and extensive background information can be called up at www.oeko-tex.com. The Oeko-Tex member institutes in the various countries will be pleased to help you with any further questions.

# 1

# What does the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 offer the consumer?

The Oeko-Tex Standard 100 is the world's leading label for textiles screened for harmful substances.

Products awarded this mark have been optimised for human ecology and tested and certificated by internationally recognised textile institutes. Textiles bearing this label are good for your well-being.

2

# How can you recognise a genuine Oeko-Tex label?

By this sign!

Make sure that the test number is quoted and the test institute is named.

The test number can be used to trace the particular certification process which was carried out.

The Oeko-Tex label is a registered trademark, protected in international law by the Madrid Agreement.

3

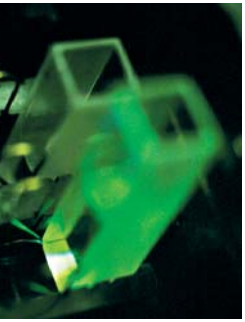
# What is the International Oeko-Tex Association?

An association of 15 well-known textile, testing and research institutes in Europe and Japan. There are branches and representatives in more than 30 countries.

The member institutes of the Oeko-Tex Association are jointly responsible for the continuous development of the Oeko-Tex Standard 100. Technical expertise about textile production and scientific findings from chemistry, medicine and related areas of research all feed into the process.

# 4

## What are the principles on which the test institutes of the International Oeko-Tex Association work?



At the start of the 90s the founding fathers – the Austrian Textile Research Institute in Vienna and the German Hohenstein Research Institute in Bönnigheim – developed the concept of the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 and the list of criteria, based on existing test regulations relating to harmful substances. This list of criteria is jointly updated every year and adapted to comply with the latest requirements. In its entirety, it goes far beyond existing national legal regulations.

All of the test institutes around the world work according to the same set test methods and regulations.

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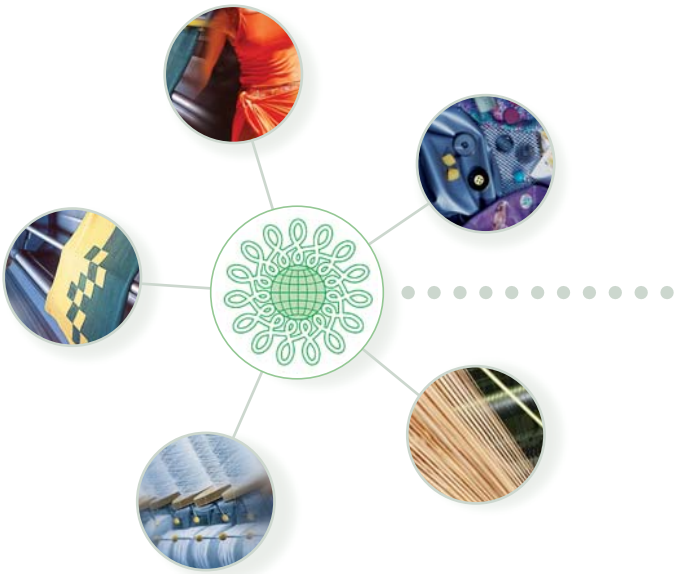
# What is the international role of the Oeko-Tex Standard 100?

Because of the differences that exist with regard to legal requirements and safety concepts in different countries, and the way work is spread internationally in the textile chain, a common safety standard for harmful substances is needed.

The requirements in the extensive list of criteria make the companies involved worldwide more sensitive to problematic harmful substances.



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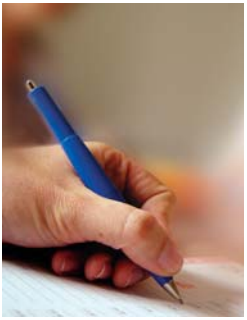
## What are the main features of the Oeko-Tex Standard 100?



- Contracts consisting of an application with a declaration of commitment and conformity, and documentation for extension
- List of criteria
- Materials testing and test report
- Issuing of certificates
- Use of the label
- Random testing

7

# What requirements does the Oeko-Tex list of criteria have to meet?

The list of criteria contains over 100 test parameters to assure that the textiles are not harmful to health. It is mandatory for all authorised Oeko-Tex test institutes.

The criteria and limit values are often ahead of the field, i.e. they include not only legally banned or controlled substances but also other substances that have been scientifically assessed as harmful to health. There are also parameters which have a preventative role.

8

# What are the test criteria for the Oeko-Tex Standard 100?

The Oeko-Tex Standard 100 excludes harmful substances or limits their use. The following parameters form part of the Oeko-Tex list of criteria:

- Specifically banned AZO dyes*
- Carcinogenic and allergy-inducing dyes
- Formaldehyde*
- Pesticides
- Chlorinated phenols
- Chloro-organic benzenes and toluenes
- Extractable heavy metals
- Colourfastness
- pH value
- Phthalates* in baby articles
- Organotin compounds (TBT and DBT)
- Emission of volatile components
- Odour
- Biologically active products and flame-retardant products are regulated separately

*In Europe these substances are legally controlled parameters for textile products

# 9

# What is the significance of the four product classes under the Oeko-Tex Standard 100?

Product class I

Product class II

Product class III

Product class IV

When assigning products to one of the four product groups, a distinction is made according to the purpose of the textile: the greater the area of skin contact, the stricter the requirements.

Under the Oeko-Tex Standard 100, babies are thought to need particular protection. In Product class I, all baby articles are subject to the strictest criteria on account of the sensitivity of babies' skin. Any finishes containing formaldehyde are prohibited. The requirement for saliva-resistance means that dyes and prints should not bleed or stain when babies suck on them.

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# How is certification under the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 achieved?

Companies in the textile chain can have their products certificated by submitting an application to an authorised test institute belonging to the International Oeko-Tex Association.

The extent of the testing is determined using selected representative samples or by presenting starting materials which have already been certificated under Oeko-Tex. Once testing has been successfully completed, and a declaration of conformity signed, the certificate can be issued. This certificate entitles the company to endorse the group of articles that has been certificated.

# 11

## How long is a certificate valid for and what costs are entailed?

An Oeko-Tex certificate is valid for 12 months. The test number that is issued on first certification is used on the Oeko-Tex label and remains the same for as long as certification continues to be renewed.

The certificate can be renewed **only** by applying for a further 12 months, which necessitates another check on the materials being used.

The certification process entails, firstly, the cost of the actual testing, which can be calculated in advance in a cost estimate, and, secondly, the certification fee.

# 12

## How does the modular system of Oeko-Tex certification operate?

Products can be certificated at all stages of the textile value added chain. The producers of fibres, yarns and fabrics, textile finishers, garment manufacturers and suppliers of accessories all form a network. If products in the preliminary stages are accepted as certificated, the cost of testing at the next processing stage can be greatly reduced. This means costs are distributed between all production stages and unnecessary duplicate testing is avoided.

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# What system of control is there under the Oeko-Tex Standard 100?

The authorised test institutes check at least 15% of all certificates issued each year.

The costs of these controls are financed by a part of the certification fee.

Products are tested which are bought from retailers in test purchases, or obtained from participating companies in unannounced random sampling. Products from the preliminary stages are tested using samples from the latest certification processes.

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# When can a finished article be awarded the Oeko-Tex label?

Only if all components of the article have been tested and certificated according to the requirements of the list of criteria for the same product class.

This includes outer fabric, padding, fillings and linings as well as accessories such as zips, buttons, straps, lace trim, sewing thread, foam filling etc.

# 15

# What needs to be ensured when awarding the Oeko-Tex label?

In order to be able to award a product the Oeko-Tex label, the company itself must enter into a contractual arrangement with the Oeko-Tex certification system and have its own certificate for that article.

Certificate numbers from the suppliers of its preliminary materials must not be used to endorse the finished article.

Having a separate certificate guarantees that the company not only works in accordance with the criteria for the Oeko-Tex Standard 100 in specific, job-related situations, but that this level of product safety has been consistently incorporated within its own quality control processes.

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# Why do more than 6000 companies worldwide support the Oeko-Tex Standard 100?

Companies in the textile and clothing industry and the associated supply sector have an interest in producing fashionable, functional and easy-care textiles which at the same time are also optimised for human ecology.

Their ongoing commitment to the Oeko-Tex certification system has set exemplary safety standards for consumers in the textile chain.

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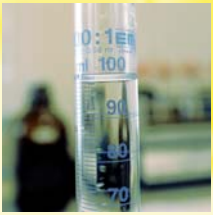

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