

How to promote green claims with confidence

A guide for small businesses



The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) is the UK's independent regulator of advertising by legitimate businesses across all media. We respond to concerns and complaints from consumers and businesses and take action to ban ads which are misleading, harmful, offensive, or irresponsible. As a proactive regulator, we also conduct our own monitoring of ads using our [Active Ad Monitoring System](#).

We take a frontline role in tackling misleading green claims in ads. We recognise businesses want to talk about their sustainability credentials but navigating green claims is not always easy. We are here to help.

We have a wide range of resources including [updated guidance](#) to help businesses interpret the rules for environment-related advertising issues. This guidance reflects:

- ASA [research](#) on people's understanding of commonly used environmental terms, specifically "carbon neutral", "net zero" and "electric" and "hybrid" vehicles.
- ASA [research](#) on people's understanding of green disposal terminology, such as 'recycled', 'biodegradable' and 'compostable'.
- Principles established by our [rulings](#) on environmental topics.

Because the context in which environmental claims are made is changing rapidly and the number of complaints to the ASA about misleading green claims is increasing, the advice is constantly under review. However, as it stands, ads generally fall under environmentally misleading and/ or social responsibility rules.

Some contextual or qualifying information is often necessary for consumers to understand the basis of green claims as unqualified claims can be misleading. Advertisers should ensure:

- Positive environmental claims about specific aspects of a business do not omit context about their wider environmental impact if they're responsible for a significant amount of emissions / harm.
- That green claims such as 'carbon neutral' or 'recycled' are substantiated and make clear any limitations.
- Claims based on future goals (reaching net zero or achieving carbon neutrality) are based on a verifiable strategy to deliver them.
- They do not assume a level of consumer knowledge greater than is reasonable or likely, even though consumer understanding of environmental claims is increasing.

We're one of the most active ad regulators in the world when it comes to climate-related issues. As part of our [Climate Change and Environment project](#), we established a dedicated 'Green Team' to embed specialist knowledge across the organisation and to provide a central contact for advertisers seeking help and advice on environmental claims.

We urge any business making environmental claims to take advantage of the free, expert and confidential advice provided by our [Copy Advice team](#). We also have a range of [training, guidance and other resources](#) on offer, including our [new e-learning module](#) on Climate Change and the Environment, that are available to help you 'greenspeak' with confidence about your environmental credentials.

You can also access general advice about advertising your products or services on our [small business web pages](#).

