

Criteria for allergy-friendly washing machines

BACKGROUND

Even freshly washed laundry is not always pleasant for allergy sufferers. Fragrances, washing results and the texture of the fabric surface affect the wearing comfort.

But the complex functions of a modern washing machine also impact the washing result. Due to the direct contact with the skin, the fabric should be free of allergy-causing residues of detergents as well as mites, animal hair and pollen after washing.

ECARF certifies washing machines with the best washing results as regards these allergens, as evidenced by compliance with the following criteria. The criteria reflect the principle that the lowest possible exposure to allergens is generally beneficial.

1. CRITERIA

1.1. Required product properties

The European Centre for Allergy Research Foundation (ECARF) awards the ECARF Seal of Quality to a washing machine if

- it has a special hygiene/allergy programme (additional longer rinse cycle and longer wash cycle at a constant temperature of 60 degrees Celsius for at least 30 min.; the general running time incl. heating phase may be longer).
- and/or it uses steam technology. The steam technology programme maintains a temperature of 60 degrees Celsius in the drum for over 45 minutes during which steam is added. The mixture of water and heat produces a highly disinfecting steam that eradicates > 99% of allergens.
- the manufacturer provides documentary evidence of reduced exposure after the washing cycle to house dust mite allergens, pollen and animal hair allergens and reduction of live dust mites and moulds.
- the detergent residues do not exceed 0.74 mg/kg (rinsing efficiency as per IEC 60456 (EN60456:2011)).
- the washing efficiency exceeds 0.99 (as per IEC 60456 (EN60456:2011)).
- all parameters such as rinsing efficiency, washing efficiency, water consumption, electricity consumption are determined in accordance with IEC 60456 (EN60456:2011).
- all product properties are documented by the manufacturer and verified by ECARF.

2. QUALITY CONTROL AND COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

The manufacturer has established a functional system of quality control that effectively documents, processes and follows up complaints.

The following is also ensured:

- The manufacturer's contact details, such as the address, telephone number and/or email address, are clearly visible on the product packaging;
- Consumer complaints are handled and followed up in an appropriate manner by qualified and experienced personnel of the manufacturer;
- The assessment of consumer complaints and, if applicable, any inferred areas of improvement are reapplied to product quality and safety. The manufacturer agrees to make this data available to ECARF on an ongoing basis.