



Greeting Card Publishing and FSC

In the UK we spend a whopping £1.75 billion on greeting cards every year.¹ If you produce or publish greeting cards and want to make sure they are printed on responsibly sourced paper and/or board, then this factsheet is for you.

What is FSC?

FSC helps take care of forests and the people and wildlife who call them home. The FSC system can help businesses and consumers to choose wood, paper and other forest products such as cork and latex, from well-managed forests and/or verified, recycled sources. FSC certification tracks forest products from the forest through each stage of processing, conversion, printing and distribution. In order for the final product to carry an FSC label, every stage must be covered by FSC certification.

Using FSC Certified Paper and Boards

FSC certified papers and boards are widely available. When purchasing card, card blanks or similar, look for an FSC label on products in store to make sure they are FSC certified. If you're buying online or in quantity we recommend you select an FSC certified supplier or FSC licence holder and make sure the product(s) you wish to purchase are FSC certified. All FSC certificate and licence holders are listed on the FSC international database at <http://info.fsc.org/>.

Using an FSC Certified Printer

Printed materials and packaging can only carry an FSC label if they are produced and labelled under a valid FSC Chain of Custody (CoC) certificate.

To check FSC certificates you can use the FSC international database: <http://info.fsc.org/>.

To ensure your printed materials carry an FSC label you should:

- Use an FSC certified printer.
- Specify FSC certified materials from the outset and request that the printer apply the appropriate FSC label.
- Ensure any supplementary text about FSC is approved by the printer's certification body.

Getting FSC Certified

Greeting card publishers do not have to hold FSC certification in order to have their cards carry an FSC label (see above) but they may apply for their own certification and either outsource their printing or print in-house. Holding FSC certification means a publisher is free to use any printer (certified or uncertified) to complete print jobs under an outsourcing policy. Certified publishers can use their own licence number within the FSC label and make FSC claims on their outgoing invoices.

To become certified you should:

- Request quotes from FSC accredited certification bodies

- Submit a certification application to the FSC certification body of your choice.
- Ensure that an appropriate CoC Management System is in place, in line with the requirements of FSC-STD-40-004.
- Undergo an on-site audit by your chosen certification body.
- Gain certification approval and receive a FSC certification code (XXX-COC-000000) and Trademark Licence Code (FSC-C000000)

The FSC Labels

The FSC label is generally printed directly onto the packaging or printed materials and is not usually a sticky label. FSC labels can be shown in positive and negative green, or black and white, and can be either landscape or portrait orientation.



Left is an example of a full FSC product label. Portrait versions of the full label must be produced at a minimum width of 17mm, and the landscape versions at a minimum height of 12mm.

Right is an example of an FSC mini label. Portrait versions of the mini label must be produced at a minimum width of 11mm, and the landscape versions at a minimum height of 8mm.



The FSC Brandmark

Help us to share the true value of forests in all our lives by adding the FSC Forests For All Forever brandmark to your greetings cards, in addition to the FSC label. Contact your printer to request it.



FAQs

Q: Do I have to hold FSC certification to publish FSC labelled cards?

A: No, but your printer must be FSC certified and printing on FSC certified materials.

Q: Can I make a text claim instead of using a label?

A: No. The FSC trademark standards do not permit the use of text-only claims such as 'printed on FSC certified paper'.

Q: I am publishing FSC labelled cards but I am selling them with non-FSC envelopes, is this ok?

A: Yes, in this case the label only refers to the product on which it is printed. However you should not imply that the envelopes are also certified.

Q: Will every card design have to be submitted to the certification body for approval?

A: The approvals process is managed by the FSC certificate holder. A generic format may be approved for use on all your cards as long as an approved FSC label is being properly used and the printer is considered by its certification body to have a good track record.

Q: Does my finishing company need to be FSC certified?

A: No, by this time the cards are already printed with the label, so the finishing company does not need to be certified.

Q: Can I use the FSC trademarks on my website or in a catalogue?

A: Yes, as long as you hold either FSC certification or a trademark licence. Contact FSC UK for further details.

This factsheet has been developed in collaboration with the Greeting Card Association.

