



Personal Protective Equipment

## Degradation, Biodegradation & Compostability

Brought To You by Ansell | Dec 20, 2023

It is important to understand the difference between degradation, biodegradation and compostability.

Some bio-based polymers or bio-plastic materials have the ability to degrade in manners which reduce environmental impact. There are two main environmentally friendly degradation processes: biodegradation and compostability.

- **Degradation** refers to the breakdown of a material over time. Materials that break down over time do not necessarily biodegrade.
- **Biodegradation** is a naturally occurring process, where the material is broken down over time from biological activity. A material can be biodegradable in one environment but not in another.
- **Compostability** is biodegradation within a defined timeframe and specific disposal systems.

Those purchasing gloves should be sure to check the source of biodegradability claims to ensure they are made by well-known, accredited sources. For example, there is a lack of scientific evidence that nitrile gloves can ever truly biodegrade.

In conclusion, making the right decisions about hand protection can help businesses deliver optimal safety while reducing their negative environmental impact. By opting for sustainable materials and understanding degradation, biodegradation, and compostability, companies can play their part in creating a healthier planet.

### ABOUT BIODEGRADATION

Degradation is not the same as biodegradation. Materials that break down over time do not necessarily biodegrade.

Furthermore, biodegradation is a natural process, whereas composting is a human-driven process.

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