

Activated Carbon Buyer's Guide

Specs, samples, COA, packing, shipping and supplier verification
for gold recovery, water treatment and air purification

YELI Carbon — Xiamen Yeli New Materials Co., Ltd

Factory-direct from Longyan, Fujian, China

www.yelicarbon.com · yelicarbon@outlook.com · WhatsApp +86 136 0090 6330

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1. Know Your Application — Pick the Right Format

Every type of activated carbon is optimized for a job. Start with the application, not the price per ton. The table below is the shortcut most buyers wish they had on the first RFQ.

Application	Best format	Feedstock & notes
	Granular, 6x12 mesh	Coconut shell; hardness is king
Drinking water (taste & odour)	Granular, 8x30 / 12x40	Coconut shell; low ash, low pH
	Powdered (PAC) or granular	Coconut or coal; dose by jar test
Air & gas (VOC, odour)	Extruded pellet	Coal or coconut; CTC value matters
	Granular	Coconut shell; rinse before use
Food & beverage decolorizing	Powdered / granular	Food-grade; follow local regulation

2. Read the Specs Like a Pro

Six parameters cover 95% of buying decisions. Every serious quote must state them all — and every shipment should prove them with a Certificate of Analysis (COA).

Parameter	What it means	Typical good value (gold-grade coconut GAC)
	Rough measure of micro-pore surface area	1000–1300
Hardness (%)	Resistance to attrition in screening/elution/backwash	≥95, ideally ≥96
	Water content; affects net weight	≤5
Ash (%)	Inorganic residue; acid-washed is lower	≤3–5 for quality grades
	Mesh cut; 6x12, 8x30, 12x40 etc.	Tight sieve range
pH	Relevant for drinking-water use	6–9 (water grade)

One-line warning: iodine value is quoted first but is not the whole story. For gold carbon, hardness matters as much as iodine; for gas-phase work, ask for CTC (carbon tetrachloride) activity; for decolorizing, methylene blue value. See our blog on **iodine tests** at yelicarbon.com/blog-iodine-test.html.

3. Samples & the COA

Serious suppliers arrange trial quantities rather than free giveaways, so the sample is representative and not a hand-picked showpiece. What to request:

- **500 g – 1 kg sample** from a production batch, with the batch number written on the pack.
- **COA for that batch** — iodine, hardness, moisture, ash, sieve analysis. A COA is only meaningful when tied to the batch number.
- **Photos or video** of the batch being sampled, if you cannot visit.

When you test the sample, run the same parameters as the COA. Coconut GAC for gold or water duty should be tested by an independent lab if the order value justifies it; the supplier should welcome this, not resist it.

4. Packing, Loading & Shipping

- **25 kg PP woven bags** with inner PE liner, palletized and shrink-wrapped — standard for most markets.
- **500 kg / 1000 kg jumbo bags** for bulk users and mines; saves handling cost.
- **20 ft container** typically loads 16–18 t of GAC; a 40 ft container about double.
- **Sea freight** from Xiamen (or Fuzhou) with FOB/CIF/CFR terms; air freight for urgent trial orders.
- **Documents:** Commercial Invoice, Packing List, Bill of Lading, COA, and fumigation certificate where required.

Ask the supplier to state the loaded weight per container on the quotation — it directly affects your landed cost per ton.

5. Payment Terms & Lead Time

- **First order:** T/T 30% deposit, 70% before shipment (or against BL copy for established buyers); L/C at sight for larger contracts.
- **Lead time:** standard grades 7–15 days after deposit; custom cuts or impregnated grades 15–25 days.
- **Re-order:** suppliers with stable feedstock should hold buffer stock — ask for their typical dispatch time before you commit.

6. Verify the Supplier Before You Pay

The difference between factory and trading company is not automatically good or bad — but you should know which one you are dealing with:

Check	What to ask / look for
	Ask for it; the registered scope should include activated carbon production or trading
Factory address	A real address you can find on a map; request a video call inside the plant
	Carbonization and activation lines on site, or a documented partnership with the actual producer
Batch traceability	Batch numbers, production date and COA on every shipment
	Bill of lading samples, or references from buyers in your region
Payment safety	Prefer T/T with deposit only, or L/C for first large orders

Red flags: refusing samples, no COA, price far below market, or pressure to pay in full before shipment without documents.

7. Quick Reference Cards

Gold recovery (CIP/CIL)

- Coconut shell granular, 6x12 mesh, iodine 1000–1300 mg/g, hardness $\geq 95\%$.
- Specify target hardness and sieve window to your circuit; ask about acid-washing and dust content.
- Plan for screening losses and make-up carbon of roughly 3–7% per year depending on your circuit.

Water treatment

- Granular 8x30 / 12x40 for T&O; and organics; 7.5–15 min EBCT; 1.5–3 m bed depth.
- Powdered for batch dosing: run a jar test on your raw water to set mg/L dose.
- Monitor effluent and bed-top iodine; replace on data (see our replacement guide at yelicarbon.com/blog-carbon-replacement-timing.html).

Need a quote or a sanity check? Send us your application, target spec and volume — we reply within 24 hours.

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