

I. Purpose

The purpose of this fact sheet is to support sustainability and to provide information and resources in procuring products that will minimize negative impacts on society and the environment to the greatest extent practicable.

II. Best Practices and Procurement Strategies

1) Reduce waste at the point of purchase.

Reduce waste by practicing the three R's: reducing, reusing, and recycling. Priority should be given to reducing waste upstream by purchasing products made from recycled material that can be reused or recycled such as letterhead stationery, envelopes, and business cards made from recycled paper. To reduce disposal costs and waste, choose items that can be remanufactured, recycled, or composted.

2) Purchase durable and reusable goods.

Using life-cycle cost analysis, rather than automatically choosing goods with the lowest purchase price, can help departments identify the best long-term value. Factor in a product's estimated life span as well as its energy, maintenance, consumable supplies and disposal costs. Consider durability of products prior to purchase. Invest in goods with extended warranties. Conduct routine maintenance on products/equipment.

Save money and minimize waste by eliminating single-use items, such as non rechargeable batteries, in favor of rechargeable batteries. Use rechargeable ink cartridges where possible.

3) Lease and rent when appropriate.

Consider an operating lease or rental rather than a purchase. Lease and rental contracts give vendors the responsibility for the upkeep of goods such as computers and copiers, and for managing them at the end of their useful life. Businesses that lease equipment tend to manufacture more durable items, salvage reusable parts, refurbish, recycle, or donate used equipment that can no longer be leased. Renting is a cost-effective option for short-term equipment needs.

4) Specify product and packaging take-back.

Increasingly, product vendors are offering to take back the products they sell when they become obsolete. By utilizing vendors who offer an Extended Product Responsibility (EPR) program, departments are ensured equipment and products are disposed of properly whether recycled, donated, refurbished or disposed of without the added cost.

Other vendors will take back used items—such as carpeting and toner cartridges—when purchasers buy new products. For example, several carpet manufacturers have invested in sophisticated recycling facilities that turn old carpet into new carpet or other goods. Toner cartridges are disposed of properly or sent to be recharged and sold at a lower cost by vendors specializing in such services.

Departments should require vendors to assume responsibility for some of their shipping materials, such as wooden pallets and excess packaging materials. When ordering large furniture or computer shipments request products ship blanket-wrapped or with reduced packing material.



5) Buy goods in bulk or concentrated form.

This practice can significantly reduce the packaging associated with lower product quantities and save costs. Carefully estimate demand when purchasing in bulk; purchasing more than is needed can create excess that becomes waste.

6) Manage surplus effectively.

Pinellas County can reduce waste by eliminating excess purchases. Reviewing past needs can minimize the procurement of unneeded items. Clean out your office supply cabinet.

7) Procure remanufactured goods and use refurbishing services.

It is generally much less expensive to buy remanufactured goods such as remanufactured toner cartridges, or to use refurbishing services for computer upgrades, carpet repair, and furniture reupholster, than to buy new items. “Recharged” toner cartridges typically save departments 30 to 50 percent per sheet of paper.

8) Purchase goods containing fewer toxic constituents.

By procuring goods with fewer or no toxic chemicals, departments can reduce their hazardous waste disposal, future liability concerns, and the risk of occupational exposure and spills. Low-toxicity products such as mercury-free medical supplies, printing ink low in volatile organic compounds (VOCs), and chrome and chlorine free cleaning supplies are increasingly available and cost-competitive.

9) Reduce paper use.

Set all printers, copiers, and fax machines to the default duplex mode if the function is available. Purchase office equipment that has duplex capability.

Utilize technology to send and store information electronically. Utilize internet fax when available.

E-mail document files instead of faxing hard copies.

Instead of having forms preprinted and stored, fill out forms online and print as needed when available and feasible.

10) Establish Sustainable Office Policies

Establish an office policy that supports sustainable purchasing guidelines. Train administrative staff and employees to identify and purchase products that support a sustainable office. Develop references to support sustainable purchasing.



Procure commodities that are certified to meet standards.

Paper and Forest Products:

- Forest Stewardship Council – www.fsc.org
- Sustainable Forestry Initiative - www.sfiprogram.org
- Chlorine Free Products Association – www.chlorinefreeproducts.org

Electronics and Appliances:

- Energy Star – www.energystar.gov/purchasing
- Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) - www.epeat.net

Cross-sector:

- Green Guard – www.greenguard.org
- Green Seal – www.greenseal.org
- Scientific Certification Systems – www.scscertified.com
- SBA.gov - www.sba.gov/content/green-certification-and-ecolabeling

Renewable Energy:

- Green-e – www.green-e.org

Building Practices and Indoor Air Quality:

- Green Building Council (LEED) – www.usgbc.org/leed

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Resources

- EPA's EPP Web Site (www.epa.gov/oppt/epp)
- National Association of Counties Green Purchasing (www.naco.org/programs/csd/Pages/NACoGreenPurchasing.aspx)
- Office of the Federal Environmental Executive (www.ofee.gov)

Examples of environmentally preferred products:

- Recycled paper and paper products
- Remanufactured laser printer toner cartridges
- Energy Star Rated computers and appliances
- Rechargeable batteries
- Re-refined lubrication, hydraulic oils, and antifreeze
- Recycled plastic outdoor-wood substitutes including plastic lumber, benches, fencing, signs and posts
- Recycled content construction, building and maintenance products, including plastic lumber, carpet, tiles and insulation
- Crushed cement concrete aggregate and asphalt
- Cement and asphalt concrete containing glass cullet, recycled fiber, plastic, tire rubber, or fly ash
- Compost, mulch, and other organics including recycled biosolid products
- Re-manufactured and/or low or VOC-free paint
- Cleaning products with lowered toxicity
- Energy saving products
- Waste-reducing products
- Water-saving products



Glossary

Environmentally Preferable Products are products that have a lesser impact on human health and the environment when compared with competing products. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product.

Green Purchasing means purchasers take into consideration the environmental impact of products when making purchasing decisions, giving preference to more environmentally friendly products when quality and price are equal or superior.

Recycled Products are products manufactured with waste material that has been recovered or diverted from solid waste. Recycled material may be derived from post-consumer waste (material that has served its intended end-use and been discarded by a final consumer), industrial scrap, manufacturing waste, or other waste that would otherwise have been wasted.

Sustainability means meeting today's needs without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their needs.

Waste Prevention means any action undertaken by an individual or organization to eliminate or reduce the amount or toxicity of materials before they enter the municipal solid waste stream. This action is intended to conserve resources, promote efficiency, and reduce pollution.

Reuse means repairing what is broken or giving it to someone who can repair it or use it in its current state.

Reduce means using fewer products and utilizing other means of doing business when available to reduce the amount and toxicity of trash discarded.

Recycle means to reprocess and reuse used material.

Life Cycle Evaluation is an evaluation of the major environmental impacts in each life-cycle stage of a product category including resource extraction, production, distribution, use, and eventual disposal or recycling. The evaluation considers energy, resource use, and emissions to air, water, and land, as well as other environmental and health impacts. The purpose of this evaluation is to identify significant life-cycle stages to be addressed.

Life Cycle Cost Analysis is an economic evaluation technique that determines the total cost of owning and operating a building or equipment.

Rechargeable means to replenish the amount of electric power in something, especially a battery.

Extended Product Responsibility (EPR) is vendors taking on the responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products through the entire product's life cycle – especially the take-back, recycle, and disposal programs.

Leasing is a legal rental contract allowing exclusive possession of rental item/property for a specific time in return for a payment.

Certification an official document or seal providing evidence and details of something that is authentic and verified by a third party.

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