DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Computers & Computer Equipment

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Environmental Purchasing Attributes

- ☑ Climate change
- ☑ Energy efficiency
- ☑ Product miles
- ☑ Product take-back
- ☑ Recyclability
- ☑ Recycled content
- ☑ Toxic chemical reduction

Benefits of Purchasing

- ☑ Lower energy bills.
- ☑ Lower greenhouse gas emissions.

How to Buy

The Western States Contracting Alliance Master Contract for Computer Equipment is an optional-use contract administered by the Department of Information Services.

Contact manufacturers on the master contracts list for EPEAT-registered products that meet your specifications.

Sample bid language for environmentally preferable purchasing computers is available on the EPEAT website at Purchaser resources.

Goal: To procure and use the greenest computers and computer equipment available.

How can you tell if computer equipment is environmentally preferable? The simplest and most cost-effective way is to use the Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT). EPEAT is a nationally recognized, web-based rating system partially funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Purchasers can use EPEAT to identify desktop computers, laptops, and monitors that meet rigorous environmental criteria over the product lifecycle. The environmental criteria are found in a standard published by the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers.

The environmental criteria include:

- Toxic materials
- Energy efficiency
- Packaging

- Design for end of life
- Product longevity
- End of life management
- Corporate performance
- Materials selection

Computer products are rated in relation to 51 total environmental criteria – 23 required criteria and 28 optional criteria. EPEAT ratings of Bronze, Silver, or Gold depend on how many criteria are met.

The EPEAT registry is based on self-declaration by manufacturers that their product meets these criteria. EPEAT conducts regular audits to ensure that registered products meet the criteria.

Buying EPEAT-registered computers encourages manufacturers to design products that are safer for human health and the environment.

Environmental Benefits from 2009 U.S. EPEAT Purchasing

Governments can use the Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator to measure the environmental benefits and cost savings of buying EPEAT-registered products. The table illustrates results of U.S. EPEAT purchases over time.

Metric	Reductions	Equivalents
Electricity	6.7 million megawatt hours	Annual electricity consumption of 558,339 average US households
Greenhouse gases emissions	1.24 MTCE	Removing 834,865 cars from the road for a year
Hazardous waste	43,395 metric tons	The weight of 21.7 million bricks
Toxic materials (including Hg)	935 metric tons including 143 kg of mercury	The weight of 467,435 bricks
Lifecycle cost savings to users and manufacturers	$631,978,722	

To view an electronic copy of this document and others, go to http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/epp/.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

The Department of Ecology offers tools and resources to make environmentally preferable purchasing easier.
Find out about environmentally preferable products, standards and certifications, and more at our website:
http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/epp/

Contact:
Tina Simcich
tina.simcich@ecy.wa.gov

Resources

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) E-Cycling Energy Star

Greenguard Certification

International Electronics Manufacturing Initiative - Environmentally Conscious Electronics (ECE)

Northwest Product Stewardship Council's Guide to Environmentally Preferable Computer Purchasing

Product Stewardship Institute

Washington State Department of Ecology - Focus on Washington's Electronic Product Recycling Program

Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition

Computer Recycling and Product Take-back

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), electronic waste is growing two to three times faster than any other waste stream. EPA estimates that only 17 to 18 percent of the two million tons of electronics that became obsolete in 2005 was recycled. Many landfills do not accept computer equipment because of the potential groundwater contamination from toxic materials.

To address the electronic waste issue, Washington State passed landmark legislation in 2006. The law requires manufacturers to provide electronic product recycling services at no cost.

Computers, laptops, monitors, and television products are taken back at convenient locations through the E-Cycle Washington program. Equipment purchased prior to 2009 is accepted.

Small governments, school districts, small businesses, charities, and households are eligible to participate (see WAC 173-900 for definitions).

Many state agencies and large local governments, which are not eligible for the program, use state recycling contract 09108. If the computer equipment is reusable, the state will refurbish it and make it available for reuse.

Reuse provides even greater environmental benefits than recycling.

See E-Cycle Washington Frequently Asked Questions for information on protecting sensitive data.

Laws and Directives

Executive Order 04-01 Persistent Toxic Chemicals	Directs state agencies to adopt measures to reduce the use of equipment, supplies, and other products that contain persistent toxic chemicals.
RCW 70.95M.060	Directs the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) to give preference to the purchase of products that contain the least amount of mercury necessary for the required performance.
RCW 70.76	Bans Deca-BDE in televisions, computers, and residential upholstered furniture by January 1, 2011 under the condition that Ecology and Health identify alternatives to Deca-BDE that also are available at a reasonable cost by December 2008.
RCW 39.26.265	Requires DES to create policies that establish a preference for electronic products that meet environmental performance standards.
RCW 70.95N	Requires that computers, laptops, monitors, or televisions cannot be sold in the state of Washington unless the manufacturer provides free recycling services no later than January 1, 2009.

To ask about available formats for the visually impaired please call the Waste 2 Resources Program at 360-407-6900. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability can call 877-833-6341.