



Office Products

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For government purchasers

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Benefits of Green Purchasing

- Reduce waste
- Protect air quality
- Reduce greenhouse gas emissions
- Toxic chemical reduction
- Less waste
- Conserve energy
- Recycled content

Buying green office products reduces waste and prevents exposure to toxics. Ask your office supply vendors for green office products with some or all of the following environmental characteristics:

- Made of highest level possible post-consumer recycled content.
- Low or no volatile organic compounds (VOCs) to reduce respiratory irritants and asthmagens.
- Highly durable.
- Refillable or reusable.
- Reduced and safer packaging.
- High level of recyclable parts.
- Reduced heavy metals, phthalates, and solvents which can impact the environment and human health.
- Product take-back.

Some of the greener office supplies available to government agencies include:

Binders: Recycled cardboard binders with recyclable clips are preferable, since conventional products often contain PVC and phthalates. Binder covers made of polypropylene are also a good choice.

Pencils: Refillable mechanical pencils or uncoated pencils with the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) label.

Pens: Recyclable, refillable pens with 80-100 percent recycled content.

Paper products: 100 percent FSC- certified chlorine-free recycled-content fiber.

Markers and Highlighters: Refillable markers cut down on waste. Xylene-free markers are less toxic.

Chalkboard and Markerboards: Low VOC, phthalate, and formaldehyde boards are available.

Batteries: Purchase rechargeable batteries and battery rechargers that can recharge several types of batteries.

Report Covers and Sheet Protectors: PVC-free alternatives are widely available.

Trash, Recycle and Compost Containers: Containers manufactured from high recycled content perform as well as new.

Make sure to ask for verification of manufacturers claims. *See Standards, Page 2*



How to Buy

Office Products are available on state contract #[09205](#).

Success Story: City of Seattle Mandatory Green Office Products

The city of Seattle rebid its office supply contracts in 2008 to dramatically increase green product purchases. The city set rigorous environmental standards to determine whether a product qualifies as green.

The city requires departments to select and purchase a green product if one is available. When city purchasers go online, the first

choice that comes up is an environmentally preferable item.

Sales of green office products went from 13.7 percent of purchases in the first quarter of 2008 to over 50 percent in 2011. Two vendors, Keeney's and Complete Office, were awarded the contract.

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 laws and directives:

<http://ecy.wa.gov/programs/swfa/epp/>

Contact:

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Resources

StopWaste.org

[Paper Office Products](#)

[Non-Paper Office Products](#)

City of Seattle

[Non-Vinyl Banners & Labels](#)

[Toxic Solvents in Office Products](#)

[Flu and Cold Prevention Products](#)

ANSI

[American National Standards Institute](#)

Performance

Green office products typically perform as well as, if not better than, non-green products.

Many office products carry ANSI certification for performance.

The best office products are the ones you can re-use many times and are recyclable when they no longer meet performance expectations.

End of Life

You can typically recycle single material products more easily than those made of multiple materials.

To track your progress in purchasing certified green products, ask the contract manager to request quarterly reports from the vendor for your agency. Ask for reports that break out purchases of all green and non-green products.

Standards

No national standard for green office products exists. You can identify safer alternatives for office products by checking independent third party standard and certification organizations such as [EcoLogo](#), [GreenGuard](#), [Forest Stewardship Council](#) and [Scientific Certification Systems](#).

For example, products certified under [Visual Display Products](#) meet the standards established by the Greenguard Children & Schools Certification Program for Low Emitting Products. This standard is for VOCs, formaldehyde, phthalates, and total particles.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines recommends minimum recycled content for paper and non-paper office products (see [EPA Products](#)).

School district purchasing programs can look for art materials certified by the [Art and Creative Materials Institute](#). Certified art supplies, such as colored pencils and white board markers, meet standards that establish acceptable lower amounts of lead, heavy metals and solvents in art products.

Laws and Directives

RCW 43.19A	Requires all state and local governmental agencies to purchase recycled content products. The State of Washington offers a ten percent bid preference for recycled content.
Executive Order 02-03 Sustainable Practices by State Agencies	Requires sustainable practices by state agencies. This includes practices that do not sacrifice the needs of future generations and reduce threats to resources such as clean water.
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.