

## Pollution Prevention (P2) Opportunity with Green Purchasing

Companies can reduce their carbon footprint while saving money by practicing environmentally preferable purchasing or “green” purchasing. Green purchasing is a way to reduce toxic substance use and the generation of hazardous waste at the source. In addition, green purchasing maximizes the efficiency of operations in various areas such as building maintenance, offices, and manufacturing, electronics, fleets and landscaping to name a few. This informational fact sheet provides resources and information on green purchasing.



### What is Green Purchasing, and Why Should We Do It?

Green purchasing is the purchase of goods and services that, when compared to competing products that serve the same purpose, minimize environmental and human health impacts.

Companies that have incorporated green purchasing have seen benefits that include:

- Reduced material costs for manufacturers.
- Reduced repair and replacement costs when using more durable and repairable equipment.
- Reduced disposal costs by generating less waste.
- Improved product design and performance of products.
- Increased employee safety and health at the facility.

Companies can also be recognized for their green purchasing! For example, the [EPEAT Purchaser Awards](#) recognize excellence in green procurement of electronics.

### Green Purchasing by Facility Area

### Stories of Success

It's important to understand the various areas at your facility in which you can make the switch to greener products.

#### **Maintenance**

The types of green products for maintenance include cleaning sorbents, carpet cleaners and degreasers, floor care products, air conditioner coil cleaners, HVAC maintenance products, compost and hydraulic mulch for landscaping.

#### **Office Areas**

Green purchasing in office areas includes products such as binders, clipboards, desktop accessories, printing supplies, trash bags, paper, tissue products, soaps, odor removers, cleaners, office electronics, and furniture. Simple substitutions of office products can reduce Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), solid waste, and lower global warming potential.

#### **Manufacturing**

Green purchasing in manufacturing includes substituting hazardous chemicals with chemicals found on the [EPA Safer Chemical Ingredients List](#)<sup>1</sup>. These chemicals are safer alternatives and address toxicological effects. Chemicals in the EPA Safer Chemical Ingredient List are grouped by their functional-use class. The list does not include confidential chemicals.

[A printing company](#)<sup>2</sup> reduced its VOCs by 92% and eliminated 1,560 pounds of hazardous waste by switching to green cleaners.

[One organization](#)<sup>3</sup> is saving \$120,000 annually by a combination of paper use reduction and purchasing post-consumer recycled content paper.

[One city's Parks and Recreation Department](#)<sup>4</sup> was able to replace several cleaning products with one cost effective option. This resulted in enhanced indoor air quality and an annual cost savings of approximately \$10,933 per year.



## Identifying Green Products

The following programs can help organizations identify green products:

### [EPA Safer Choice](#)<sup>5</sup>

Safer Choice has over 2,000 products in their program – many of which are office and maintenance supplies such as liquid cleaners and desktop accessories. A Safer Choice product contains ingredients that are safer for people and the environment.



### [EPA WaterSense](#)<sup>6</sup>

WaterSense offers a variety of resources and initiatives to help businesses manage their facilities to save water, energy, and operating costs. Products labeled by WaterSense include bathroom sink faucets, toilets, urinals, showerheads, irrigation controllers, and commercial pre-rinse spray valves.

### [The Comprehensive Procurement Guideline \(CPG\) Program](#)<sup>7</sup>

The CPG program certifies products that make use of materials recovered from solid waste. There are eight product categories in the CPG program: construction products, landscaping products, miscellaneous products, non-paper office products, paper and paper products, transportation products, and vehicular products.

### [United States Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) BioPreferred Program](#)<sup>8</sup>

The USDA Certified Biobased label assures a consumer that the product contains a verified amount of renewable biological ingredients. Categories in the BioPreferred catalog include adhesives, construction materials and composites, fibers, paper, and packaging, fuels and fuel additives, inks, landscaping materials and composted livestock and crop residue, lubricants and functional fluids, paints and coatings, plastics (monomers and polymers), solvents and cleaners and sorbents.

### [Energy Star Labeled Products](#)<sup>9</sup>

Energy Star labeled products helps you identify products including appliances, HVAC, lighting, building products and other equipment which is more energy efficient than standard products.



### [Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool \(EPEAT®\)](#)<sup>10</sup>

EPEAT registered products meet strict environmental criteria that address the full product lifecycle, from energy conservation and toxic materials to product longevity and end-of-life management. The EPEAT® registry currently includes desktops, laptops/notebooks, workstations, thin client displays (computer monitors), televisions, printers, copiers, scanners, multifunction devices, fax machines, digital duplicators and mailing machines.

## References

The following resources

<sup>1</sup> EPA. Safer Chemical Ingredients List: <https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice/safer-ingredients>.

<sup>2</sup> Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. *Clear Lake Press goes Green*. <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/news/clear-lake-press-goes-green>

<sup>3</sup> County of Alameda. *A Strategic Plan for Copy Paper: Buying Less and Buying Better*. <http://www.acgov.org/sustain/documents/casestudy-2015SPLC-coppaper.pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> City of Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department. *Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program Green Janitorial Product– Multi-Purpose Cleaner* <https://www.phoenix.gov/oepsite/Documents/100861.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> EPA. *Learn About the Safer Choice Label*: <https://www.epa.gov/saferchoice/learn-about-safer-choice-label>.

<sup>6</sup> EPA. *WaterSense*: <https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/index.html>.

<sup>7</sup> EPA. *Comprehensive Procurement Guideline (CPG) Program*: <https://www.epa.gov/smm/comprehensive-procurement-guideline-cpg-program#directory>.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture. *BioPreferred*: <https://www.biopreferred.gov/BioPreferred/faces/Welcome.xhtml>.

<sup>9</sup> Energy Star. *Buildings & Plants*: <https://www.energystar.gov/buildings?s=footer>.

<sup>10</sup> Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool: <http://www.epeat.net/>

## Additional References

Hopkins, M. (2016). *What Executives Don't Get About Sustainability (and Further Notes on the Profit Motive)*. MIT Sloan Management Review. <http://sloanreview.mit.edu/article/what-executives-dont-get-about-sustainability-and-further-notes-on-the-profit-motive/>