

CITY OF SAN RAFAEL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES



Policy No.	
Subject:	Green Purchasing Policy for Office Supplies
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Prepared By:	Employee Green Team
Approved By:	Nancy Mackle, City Manager

ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PURCHASING POLICY

PURPOSE:

The City of San Rafael has long been a leader in environmental protection. In 2009 the City Council adopted a Climate Change Action Plan that, among other programs, calls for our organization to adopt an environmentally preferable purchasing policy to reduce the environmental impacts of City operations. This policy fulfills Program LF18 of the Climate Change Action Plan, and Program SU-13d of the General Plan to modify the City's purchasing practices and provide a model for other businesses and organizations.

The purpose of this policy is to reduce the environmental impact of City office operations and to reduce health hazards for City staff, residents, and visitors by purchasing and using products that do the least harm to human health and to the environment. This Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy is also intended to create a single policy to replace earlier product-specific City Manager directives in order to have consistency and simplicity in regards to purchases, and to complement the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy for Janitorial Chemicals, Soaps and Cleaning Products. This policy is intended for City staff and operations only, and is not meant to apply to contractors or supersede state and federal law.

Furthermore, it is the intent of the City to encourage best sustainable practices among City departments and staff. Generally, staff should institute practices that reduce waste, encourage reuse, and result in the purchase of fewer or more sustainably manufactured products, whenever possible. For example, generally it is better to reuse binders and folders rather than purchase new ones, and to check with other staff to see if there are extra supplies or materials that could be redeployed before buying new. Similarly, it is generally better to purchase products containing recycled content or to buy remanufactured products, and sometimes it is better to buy in useable amounts rather than to always buy large quantity bundles.

DEFINITIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS:

EcoLogo is a third-party, multi-attribute eco-labeling program founded by the Canadian government in 1988. The Program compares products / services with others in the same category, develops rigorous and scientifically relevant criteria, and awards the EcoLogo to those that are environmentally preferable throughout their entire lifecycle. Visit www.ecologo.org/en/ for more information on the labeling program.



Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) is a procurement tool to help institutional purchasers in the public and private sectors evaluate, compare and select desktop computers, notebooks and monitors based on their environmental attributes. Use www.epeat.net/ to search the registry of environmentally sustainable electronics.



Energy Star means the U.S. EPA's energy efficiency product labeling program. Products with the Energy Star label have been third-party tested to use less energy, save money, and help protect the environment. Please visit <http://www.energystar.gov/> for more information.



Forest Stewardship Council Certification: is a global organization that certifies responsible, on-the-ground forest management according to rigorous standards developed by a broad variety of stakeholder groups. Visit <https://us.fsc.org/> for more information.



Green Seal Certification: Green Seal is an independent non-profit organization dedicated to safeguarding the environment and transforming the marketplace by promoting the manufacture, purchase and use of environmentally responsible products and services. A Green Seal Certification Mark on a product means that it has gone through a rigorous science-based evaluation process to show that it has less impact on the environment and human health. The Green Seal means that the product has passed the test; that it works as well as (or better) than others in its class; and that it has been evaluated without bias or conflict of interest. A comprehensive list of acceptable products and retailers can be found at www.greenseal.org.



U.S. EPA Guidelines means the Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for federal agency purchases as of May 2002 and any subsequent versions adopted. Please visit <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/consERVE/tools/cpg/products/index.htm> for more information on which products have been rated by the U.S. EPA.



GREEN BUSINESS PURCHASES:

City departments should, whenever possible, make purchases from businesses certified green by the Bay Area Green Business Program. Businesses that have become certified green have met standards in areas such as recycling, lighting efficiency programs, and use of low-toxicity cleaning supplies. To find a certified Green Business, visit www.greenbiz.ca.gov.

PLASTIC WATER BOTTLES:

City departments should not purchase individual-serving plastic water bottles for use within City facilities, at meetings and at City-sponsored events. The purchase of plastic water bottles for emergency stores is allowed when necessary. Departments are encouraged to purchase insulated pitchers for the provision of water at meetings. Staff members are encouraged to utilize reusable mugs and containers to reduce the use of paper cups. Departments which

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provide bottled water in bulk (e.g. 5-gallon bottles) should install a water filtration device in areas where plumbing connections are possible.

RATIONALE: Over one BILLION plastic water bottles end up in California landfills each year. They do not decompose. Fifty billion plastic water bottles are manufactured each year in the U.S., consuming enough barrels of oil to power 100,000 passenger vehicles per year. Water filtration devices cut down on plastic waste and can also provide long-term cost savings.

OFFICE PAPER AND NOTE PADS:

City department purchasers should procure supplies of office paper (copier/printer) that contain recycled content. These purchases should be at least 30% (preferably 40% or higher) post-consumer content, with no chlorine bleach. Purchasers should make sure the paper states that it contains "post-consumer recycled content" or PCW, because some green labeling will say the paper is "green" simply due to having sustainably managed forests supplying the paper. However, that is not the same as closing the loop and buying products with recycled content. Recycled paper should meet US Environmental Protection Agency standards, and/or hold a Forest Stewardship Council certification.

Department staff should also reduce overall paper use by scanning rather than faxing documents, using smaller fonts and margins, reusing office paper as scratch paper, setting copiers and printers to print duplex (two-sided copies) as a default setting, and reducing multiple personal copies.

RATIONALE: Over 40% of logged trees are used to make paper. Annual paper use in the U.S. eliminates 30 million acres of forest. Paper manufacturing is the third highest user of fossil fuels. Fifty cases of paper made with at least 30% post-consumer recycled content saves five trees, 449 gallons of water and equals the savings of one month's energy use in the average American home compared to no recycled content.

MISCELLANEOUS OFFICE SUPPLIES:

City departments should buy binders with recycled content and no/low levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). City staff is encouraged to reuse binders from older projects. File folders, manila folders, post-it notes, pencils, pens and paperclips should have the highest recycled content and no/low levels of VOCs. The City should also encourage staff to use refillable pens, to reuse folders from older projects, and to seek office supplies with an environmental certification.

ELECTRONICS:

City departments should purchase equipment (computers, monitors, copiers, printers, faxes, etc.) that consume as little power as possible during operation, and are as efficient as possible. When feasible, equipment should be Energy Star qualified and/or EPEAT rated. Once installed, electronic equipment should have the function enabled for switching automatically into low-power or power-off mode when not in regular use. Moreover, the electronic equipment should have the capacity for upgrades or expansion for a longer, more useful life.

City staff members should be encouraged to turn off their assigned equipment during non-work hours. Centrally located devices, such as printers and copiers, should also be turned off when not in regular use.

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All old, unusable, and/or replaced electronics should continue to be taken to an authorized e-waste collector, certified and audited by the State of California or other competent authority, unless ownership is instead transferred to another entity according to the City's general procurement policies.

KITCHEN AND CLEANING PRODUCTS:

Dishes and Utensils: Staff should use reusable dishes and utensils for daily use, and preferably for all events. They should also use pitchers and real cups/mugs for meetings. If disposable items must be purchased for special events, they should buy those with recycled content, no chlorine, buy only what they need, and try to reuse them as much as possible.

Cleaning Supplies: When buying cleaners for City use, City departments or staff members should focus on cleaners without toxicity and that are concentrated, when possible. Look for environmental certifications such as Green Seal, EcoLogo, and the EPA's Design for the Environment. When buying cleaners in official janitorial capacity, contracted cleaners should see the City's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy for Janitorial Chemicals, Soaps and Cleaning Products.

City departments and staff should not use aerosol products—they should switch to pump products instead. They should also ensure that proper dilution rates are used for concentrated materials. Departments and staff should avoid anti-bacterial products and disinfectants unless necessary; they should only use alcohol-based, not triclosan-based, products; and they should buy paper towels from recycled content and with smaller sheets to conserve paper.

RECYCLING:

City departments should encourage staff to recycle ALL recyclable materials by providing paper recycling receptacles in locations that are easy for all employees to access, by providing paper recycling receptacles adjacent to copiers and printers, and by providing large containers for mixed recyclables for glass, metal and plastics in common areas. Departments should also provide or facilitate education to staff members to assist in recycling efforts. Where possible, staff should try to use refillable or remanufactured ink and toner cartridges then re-use or recycle the empty cartridges.

RATIONALE: Marin County leads the nation in rates of recycling, but each year the total amount of debris at the Redwood Landfill increases.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None. The cost of environmentally responsible office products is essentially equivalent to conventional products, with no compromise of effectiveness.

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS:

City of San Rafael Climate Change Action Plan, April 2009
City of San Rafael Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy for Janitorial Chemicals, Soaps and Cleaning Products, August 2008

APPROVED BY:

Nancy Mackle, City Manager

Date