



EcoPurchasing means
considering attributes
such as



recycled content
toxicity
reusability
durability
repairability



before you buy
a product.

2000 Buy-Recycled Series Nonpaper Office Products

The soda bottle you recycled after lunch might end up back on your desk as a recycled binder or pencil holder. Used toner cartridges and printer ribbons once considered “trash” are now remanufactured and returned, providing your office with high-performance products at considerable savings.



To make it easier to buy recycled, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) updates the Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG) every 2 years. Through the CPG, EPA designates items that must contain recycled materials when purchased by federal, state, and local agencies, or by government contractors, using appropriated federal funds. Several nonpaper office products are among these items. EPA's research shows that the items designated in the CPG are of high quality, widely available, and cost-competitive with virgin products. EPA also issues nonregulatory companion guidance—the Recovered Materials Advisory Notice (RMAN)—that recommends levels of recycled content for those items.

If you're involved in purchasing office supplies, you can help close the recycling loop and create a demand for the materials we collect for recycling each day. Lead by example—buy recycled-content office products such as trash bags, binders, plastic envelopes and file folders, and desktop accessories.





What Is The CPG?

The CPG requires federal agencies to buy items made from recovered materials.

Recycling is more than just dropping off your cans, bottles, and newspapers at the curb or at a local collection facility. Diverting recyclables from the waste stream is only the first of three steps in the recycling process. The second step occurs when companies use these recyclables to manufacture new products. The third step comes when you purchase products made from recovered materials. That's how we close the loop.

To support markets for the materials collected in recycling programs and to help these programs expand, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act requires agencies to buy recycled-content products designated by EPA. In addition, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13101 in September 1998, which called for an increase in the federal government's use of recycled-content and other environmentally preferable products.

Issued in May 1995, the first CPG designated 19 new products in seven product categories, including binders, office recycling containers, office waste receptacles, plastic desktop accessories, plastic trash bags, and toner cartridges. The first CPG also incorporated five previously designated items. Procuring agencies are required to purchase these items with recycled content. The first CPG update (CPG II) was published in November 1997, and designated an additional 12 items, including plastic envelopes and printer ribbons. A second CPG update (CPG III) was published in January 2000 and designated an additional 18 items, including plastic binders, plastic clipboards, plastic file folders, plastic clip portfolios, and plastic presentation folders.

Procuring agencies include all federal agencies, and any state or local government agency or government contractor that uses appropriated federal funds to purchase the designated items. If your agency spends more than \$10,000 per year on a product designated in the CPG,

you are required to purchase it with the highest recycled-content level practicable. The CPG also applies to lease contracts covering designated items.

Once designated, an agency has 1 year to develop an affirmative procurement program (or revise an existing one) for a designated item it purchases. By May 1, 1996, agencies were required to develop affirmative procurement programs to incorporate buy-recycled requirements for recycling containers and waste receptacles; plastic desktop accessories; plastic covered, paper covered, and pressboard binders; trash bags; and toner cartridges. By November 13, 1998, agencies were required to revise their affirmative procurement programs to add printer ribbons and plastic envelopes. Agencies also must revise their affirmative procurement programs to add the items designated under CPG III by January 2001. This effort might involve reviewing specifications for those products and eliminating provisions that pose barriers to procuring them with recycled content (such as aesthetic requirements unrelated to product performance). Also, be aware that paper envelopes were designated in CPG I. Recommended recycled-content ranges for paper envelopes are addressed in the RMAN for paper products and can also be found in the Buy-Recycled Series Paper Products fact sheet.

The CPG acknowledges, however, that specific circumstances might arise that preclude the purchase of products made with recovered materials. Your agency may purchase designated items that do not contain recovered materials if it determines that: 1) the price of a given designated item made with recovered materials is unreasonably high, 2) there is inadequate competition (not enough sources of supply), 3) unusual and unreasonable delays would result from obtaining the item, or 4) the recycled-content item does not meet the agency's reasonable performance specifications.

How Do I Purchase Recycled-Content Nonpaper Office Products?

EPA issues guidance in RMANs, which are designed to make it as easy as possible to buy the designated items. The RMANs recommend recycled-content levels to look for when purchasing office products, as shown in the chart on the next page. Following the RMANs' recommended levels will help ensure your affirmative procurement program and standards meet the buy-recycled requirements.

Rather than specifying just one level of recycled content, the RMANs recommend ranges that reflect

actual market conditions. The recommendations are based on market research identifying recycled-content products that are commercially available, are competitively priced, and meet buyers' quality standards.

Refer to EPA's availability list entitled "Nonpaper Office Products Containing Recovered Materials" for sources of the designated nonpaper office items. See the last section of this fact sheet for this and other helpful resources.

Plastic Envelopes:	CASE STUDY: U.S. Postal Service & U.S. General Services Administration
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Used in heavy-duty, security-related, and other specialized mailing applications by the express mail, banking, legal, and other industries. Lightweight, tear-resistant, durable, and water-resistant. 	<p>The United States Postal Service (USPS) has been using Tyvek® envelopes with a minimum of 25 percent postconsumer high-density polyethylene (HDPE) plastic ever since the product became available. In a typical year, USPS spends more than \$20 million on 120 million Tyvek® envelopes nationwide, using them primarily for express mail and priority mail. USPS staff credit the reliability, superior strength, and lightweight properties of Tyvek® for its success in the USPS mail distribution network. The U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) also cites the envelopes' strength and weight as reasons for their annual use of almost 2 million envelopes nationwide at a purchasing cost of more than \$400,000. For more information, contact Dick Lee of the USPS at 202 268-4153 or Cathy Ferreira of GSA at 212 264-2683.</p>
Printer Ribbons:	CASE STUDY: State of Alabama
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reinked printer ribbons are used ribbons in printer cartridges that are reinked using electromagnetic machinery. Ribbons can be reinked until they reach the end of their useful life and begin to fall apart. Reloaded printer ribbons are new fabric ribbons that are reloaded by vendors when used ribbons run out of ink. The printer cartridge is reused. 	<p>The state of Alabama has used reinked printer ribbons for years. The state purchasing agency has ordered more than 3,000 reinked ribbons since November 1991. The Alabama Department of Human Resources alone typically requests approximately 200 reinked ribbons per year. In addition, the cost of the reinked ribbons is six times less than the cost of buying new ribbons and cartridges. For more information, contact John P. Patterson of the state of Alabama at 334 242-3243 or Patricia Antle at 334 242-7253.</p>
	CASE STUDY: U.S. Postal Service
	<p>In 1993, the USPS district in Maine began purchasing reinked printer ribbons, in large part due to the environmental commitment of an individual in the purchasing department. Today, the district purchases more than 150 ribbons a year from a local manufacturer, for both large and small impact printers. The switch has worked out quite well. The reinked ribbons are one-third to one-half as expensive as virgin ribbons. Maine USPS staff members are very pleased with the performance of the product, noting that the ribbons last as long, if not longer, than virgin ribbons. For more information, contact Bob Kearney of the USPS at 207 828-8423.</p>

How Do I Purchase Recycled-Content Nonpaper Office Products? (continued)

EPA's Recommended Content Levels for Nonpaper Office Products	
Nonpaper Office Product ¹	Recovered Material Content Recommendations
Recycling Containers and Waste Receptacles: —Plastic —Steel ² —Paper —Corrugated —Solid Fiber Boxes —Industrial Paperboard	20–100% (postconsumer) 16% (postconsumer)/25–30% (total) 25–50% (postconsumer)/25–50% (total) 40% (postconsumer) 40–80% (postconsumer)/100% (total)
Plastic Desktop Accessories (polystyrene) including desk organizers, sorters, and trays, and memo, note, and pencil holders	25–80% (postconsumer)
Binders: —Plastic-Covered —Paper-Covered —Pressboard —Solid Plastic —HDPE —PE —PET —Misc. Plastics	25–50% 75–100% (postconsumer)/90–100% (total) 20% (postconsumer)/50% (total) 90% (postconsumer)/90% (total) 30–50% (postconsumer)/30–50% (total) 100% (postconsumer)/100% (total) 80% (postconsumer)/80% (total)
Trash Bags (plastic)	10–100% (postconsumer)
Toner Cartridges	Return used toner cartridges for remanufacturing and reuse or purchase a remanufactured or recycled-content replacement cartridge.
Printer Ribbons	Procure printer ribbon reinking or reloading services or procure reinked or reloaded printer ribbons.
Plastic Envelopes	25% (postconsumer)/25–35% (total)
Plastic Clipboards: —HDPE —PS —Misc. Plastics	90% (postconsumer)/90% (total) 50% (postconsumer)/50% (total) 15% (postconsumer)/15–80% (total)
Plastic File Folders —HDPE	90% (postconsumer)/90% (total)
Plastic Clip Portfolios —HDPE	90% (postconsumer)/90% (total)
Plastic Presentation Folders —HDPE	90% (postconsumer)/90% (total)

¹EPA's recommendations do not preclude procuring agencies from purchasing nonpaper office products manufactured using other materials, such as wood or cloth. EPA simply recommends that procuring agencies, when purchasing nonpaper office products designated in the procurement guidelines, purchase these products containing recovered materials.

²The recommended recovered materials content levels for steel in this table reflect the fact that the designated item is made from steel manufactured from in a Basic Oxygen Furnace (BOF). Steel from the BOF process contains 25–30% total recovered materials, of which 16% is postconsumer steel.

How Can I Get More Information?



Information Available From EPA

This fact sheet and the following publications on buying recycled-content products are available or can be accessed in electronic format on the Internet at <www.epa.gov/cpg>. Use Internet e-

mail to order paper copies of documents. Include the requestor's name and mailing address on all orders. Address e-mail to: rcradocket@epamail.epa.gov.

Paper copies also may be ordered by calling the RCRA Hotline. Callers within the Washington Metropolitan Area must dial 703 412-9810 or TDD 703 412-3323 (hearing impaired). Long-distance callers may call 800 424-9346 or TDD 800 553-7672. The RCRA Hotline operates weekdays, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., e.s.t.

- ❖ **EPA Expands Comprehensive Procurement Guideline (CPG)** (EPA530-F-00-017). This fact sheet provides general information about the CPG and the development of affirmative procurement programs.
- ❖ **Federal Register (FR)** notices promulgating CPG I (60 FR 21370/EPA530-Z-95-006) and RMAN I (60 FR 21386/EPA530-Z-95-007), May 1, 1995. FR notices promulgating CPG II (62 FR 60961/EPA530-Z-97-009) and RMAN II (62 FR 60975/EPA530-Z-97-010), November 13, 1997. FR notices promulgating CPG III (65 FR 3070) and RMAN III (65 FR 3082), January 19, 2000.
- ❖ **Nonpaper Office Products Containing Recovered Materials** (EPA530-B-99-014). This list identifies manufacturers and suppliers of nonpaper office products containing recovered materials. (Each listing is based on information provided by the manufacturer and does not constitute an endorsement by EPA.)
- ❖ **A Study of State and Local Government Procurement Practices that Consider Environmental Performance of Goods and Services** (EPA742-R-96-007). This report provides important program elements and case studies of state and county agencies purchasing environmentally preferable products and services. For a copy of the report or more information on EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) program, contact the Pollution Prevention Information Clearinghouse at 401 M Street, SW. (7409), Washington, DC 20460. Phone: 202 260-1023. Fax: 202 260-4659. Visit the EPP home page at <www.epa.gov/oppt/epp>.



Other Sources of Information

- ❖ **Buy Recycled Business Alliance.** The Alliance includes over 3,200 companies and organizations committed to increasing their use of recycled-content products and materials in their day-to-day operations. The Alliance offers educational materials, a quarterly newsletter, and product-specific guides. Public purchasing entities can join for free. For more information, contact Kevin Barry, National Recycling Coalition, 1727 King Street, Suite 105, Alexandria, VA 22314-2720. Phone: 703 683-9025, Ext. 210. Fax: 703 683-9026. Web site: www.nrc-recycle.org. E-mail: brbainfo@nrc-recycle.org.
- ❖ **DLA Environmental Products Catalogue.** This document is an important source of supply information for environmental products from the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA). It includes items from all DLA inventory control points containing recycled

material or having other environmental benefits. For more information, call 800 345-6333 or fax 800 352-3291. Military customers can call DSN 695-5699 or fax DSN 695-5695. For information on the CD-ROM version of the catalogue, contact the DLA Service Center at 616 961-4459 or DSN 932-4459. Web site: www.dscr.dla.mil

- ❖ **U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)** GSA publishes various supply catalogs, guides, and schedules for recycled-content products available through the Federal Supply Service. For copies of the following documents and other information, contact GSA, Centralized Mailing List Service (7CAFL), 4900 Hemphill Street, P.O. Box 6477, Fort Worth, TX 76115-9939. Phone: 817 334-5215. Fax: 817 334-5561. You can also access GSA Advantage!, GSA's Internet-based online ordering system, to order any GSA product at <www.fss.gsa.gov/cgi-bin/advwel>.
 - **Recycling Collection Containers and Specialty Waste Receptacles, Federal Supply Schedule Group 72, Part 7, Schedule B.** Lists a variety of containers and receptacles available for purchase.
 - **Next Day Delivery Office Supplies, Federal Supply Schedule Group 75, Part 3, Section A.** Lists 25 percent recovered-content plastic envelopes for purchase for next day delivery.
 - **Environmental Products Guide.** This guide is designed to help procurement officials identify environmentally preferable products and services. It contains nearly 3,000 items, including many recycled-content products.
- ❖ **Greening the Government: A Guide to Implementing Executive Order 12873.** This guide provides detailed information on establishing and implementing federal affirmative procurement plans. Updated in the summer of 1997, it is available without charge from the Office of the Federal Environmental Executive, Ariel Rios Building, Mail Code 1600S, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20460. Phone: 202 564-1297. Fax: 202 564-1393. Web site: www.ofee.gov. You can also download an electronic version on the Internet at <www.ofee.gov/html/guide/html>.
- ❖ **National Association of State Purchasing Officials (NASPO).** NASPO's Internet-based Database of Recycled Commodities (DRC) includes information from states on their recycled product procurement. Data include product distributors, manufacturers, brand names, recycled and postconsumer content, "Energy Star" rating, units purchased, unit of measurement, unit price, and type of procurement. Visit the NASPO web site at <fcn.state.fl.us/bpsr/drc_notice.html>.
- ❖ **Official Recycled Products Guide.** This directory lists more than 5,000 manufacturers and distributors of recycled-content products, including those of plastic desktop accessories, trash bags, and plastic envelopes. Contact: Recycling Data Management Corporation, P.O. Box 577, Ogdensburg, NY 13669. Phone: 800 267-0707. Fax: 315 471-3258.
- ❖ **Recycled Plastic Products Source Book.** This booklet lists more than 1,300 plastic products from approximately 300 manufacturers, including nonpaper office products. For more information, call the American Plastics Council (APC), 1801 K Street, NW., Suite 7010, Washington, DC 20006. Phone: 202 974-5400. Fax: 202 296-7119. Visit the APC Web site at <www.plasticsresource.com>.

How Can I Get More Information? (Continued)



Internet Sites

Government Sites

❖ **The Comprehensive Procurement**

Guidelines: <www.epa.gov/cpg>. This site describes EPA's effort to facilitate the procurement of products containing recovered materials, including information on CPG, RMANs, and the Buy-Recycled Series.

❖ **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP):**

<www.epa.gov/oppt/epp>. EPA's Environmentally Preferable Purchasing program encourages and assists federal agencies to purchase environmentally preferable products and services. The site explains EPA's proposed guiding principles for including environmental performance in purchasing decision-making, and posts case studies of successful pilot projects in both the public and private sectors.

❖ **Federal Trade Commission:**

<www.ftc.gov/bcp/grnrule/guides980427.htm>. The Federal Trade Commission issued Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims in May 1998.

❖ **The Fedmarket Procurement Assistance Jumpstation:**

<www.fedmarket.com/sales_resources/bids/federal.html>. This site contains links to many sites containing procurement information.

❖ **Jobs Through Recycling:** <www.epa.gov/jtr>. EPA's Jobs Through Recycling program stimulates economic growth and recycling market development by assisting businesses and supporting a network of state and regional recycling contacts. This Web site provides information on financing and technical assistance for recycling businesses, as well as other market development tools.

❖ **King County Recycled Product Procurement Program:**

<www.metrokc.gov/oppis/recyclea.html>. This site describes the tools and techniques developed by King County, Washington, agencies for purchasing recycled products.

❖ **Municipal Solid Waste:** <www.epa.gov/msw>. This site includes information on recycling, source reduction, and reuse. Contains state municipal solid waste data and the latest facts and figures on waste generation and disposal.

❖ **WasteWise:** <www.epa.gov/wastewise>. WasteWise is a free, voluntary EPA program through which organizations eliminate costly municipal solid waste, benefitting their bottom line and the environment. The program provides hands-on assistance to members to help them purchase or manufacture recycled-content products, prevent waste, and recycle solid waste materials.

Product Information

❖ **Recycling Data Network Information Services:**

<www.epa.gov/cpg/links.htm>. This commercial Web site provides access, on a subscription basis, to a recycled-content products database of over 4,500 listings in 700 product classifications. Managed by the publisher of the Official Recycled Products Guide, the product database is considered to be the largest of its kind.

❖ **California Recycled-Content Product Database:**

<www.ciwmb.ca.gov/RCP>. This site contains information on why to buy recycled-content products, how to procure them, and provides access to a database with information on products, as well as manufacturers, distributors, reprocessors, mills, and converters across the country who procure or produce these products.

In addition, contact your state solid waste management agency for information about local and regional businesses that produce or distribute recycled-content products.

United States
Environmental Protection Agency
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