

I. PURCHASING

I.1. ...Environmentally Preferable “Green” Procurement

DATE: May 1, 2011

The purpose of this SOP is to minimize the negative environmental impacts of the County’s activities by ensuring the procurement of services and products that:

- reduce toxicity
- conserve natural resources, materials, and energy
- maximize recyclability and recycled content
- maximize energy efficiency in procurement of new computer equipment
- reward manufacturers and vendors that reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems
- create a model for successfully purchasing environmentally preferable products that encourages other purchasers within our local communities to adopt similar goals

Recycled Goods and Services - The County supports markets for recycled goods and other environmentally preferable products and services by requiring County departments, administrative units and contractors to procure and utilize such goods, products and services whenever practicable.

1. Purchase products and services that minimize environmental impacts, toxics, pollution, and hazards to worker and community safety to the greatest extent practicable, and that meet the performance requirements. Factors that should be considered when determining the environmentally preferable good or service include, but are not limited to:
 - a. Minimization of virgin material use in product or service life cycle.
 - b. Maximization of recycled products used in product or service life cycle.
 - c. Maximization of recycled material content used in product or service life cycle.
 - d. Environmental cost of entire product or service life cycle.
 - e. Reuse of existing products or materials in product or service life cycle.
 - f. Recyclability of product.
 - g. Minimization of packaging.
 - h. Reduction of energy/water consumption.
 - i. Toxicity reduction or elimination.
 - j. Elimination of non-certified hardwoods in product or service life cycle.
 - k. Durability and maintenance requirements.

1. Ultimate disposal of the product.
2. Procure environmentally preferable products and services where criteria have been established by governmental or other widely recognized authorities (e.g., EPEAT Silver, Energy Star, EPA Eco Purchasing Guidelines).
3. Integrate environmental factors into the County's buying decisions where external authorities have not established criteria, such as:
 - a. instituting practices that reduce waste by increasing product or service efficiency and effectiveness, resulting in the purchase of fewer products wherever practicable and cost-effective without reducing safety or workplace quality.
 - b. replacing disposable products with reusable or recyclable products that also durable, long lasting, and refillable to the greatest extent practicable.
 - c. supporting eco-labeling practices by buying products bearing such labels in preference of others, where they are available and provide economic value.
 - d. taking into account life cycle costs and benefits.
 - e. evaluating, as appropriate, the environmental performance of vendors in providing products and services.
4. Raise staff awareness on the environmental issues affecting procurement by providing relevant information and training.
5. Encourage suppliers and contractors to offer environmentally preferable products and services at competitive prices.
6. Encourage providers of services to consider environmental impacts of service delivery.
7. Comply with all environmental legislative and regulatory requirements in the procurement of products and services, including, but not limited to Resolution No. 282 of 2010 requiring the purchase and use of green cleaning products in all County facilities and Resolution No. 283 of 2010 requiring the purchase and use of low or no volatile organic compounds (VOC) paints and coatings in all County facilities.
8. **Definitions**
 - a. **Environmentally Preferable Products and Services** means products and services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product.
 - b. **Life Cycle Cost** means the amortized annual cost of a product, including capital costs, installation costs, operating costs, maintenance costs, and disposal costs discounted over the lifetime of the product.
 - c. **Practicable** means sufficient in performance and available at a reasonable price.

- d. **Recyclable Product** means a product which, after its intended end use, can demonstrably be diverted from the County of Ulster's solid waste stream for use as a raw material in the manufacture of another product.
- e. **Recycled Material** means material and byproducts that have been recovered or diverted from solid waste, and have been utilized in place of raw or virgin material in manufacturing a product. It is derived from post-consumer recycled material, manufacturing waste, industrial scrap, agricultural waste, and other waste material, but does not include material or byproducts generated from, and commonly reused within, an original manufacturing process.
- f. **Virgin Material** means any material occurring in its natural form. Virgin Material is used in the form of raw material in the manufacture of new products.

9. **Purchasing Department Responsibilities:**

- a. Develop and maintain information about environmentally preferable products and services and recycled products containing the maximum practicable amount of recycled materials, to be purchased by departments, administrative units and contractors whenever possible.
- b. Inform departments, administrative units and contractors of their responsibilities under this procedure and provide implementation assistance.
- c. Require the use of recycled materials and recycled products by incorporating them in bid specifications where practicable.
- d. Disseminate information on recycled and environmentally preferable product procurement requirements, specifications, and performance to assist vendors with procurement opportunities with the County.

10. **Department of Environment Responsibilities:**

- a. Support the Purchasing Department in its implementation of this procedure by providing training, information when requested, and assistance in the evaluation of environmentally preferable products and services.
- b. Support departments and administrative units in evaluation and analysis of environmentally preferable products and services.
- c. In collaboration with the Purchasing Department and the requisitioning department or administrative unit, establish guidelines governing the review and approval of specifications for the procurement of selected materials based on considerations of recycling, energy and water conservation, life cycle costing and other environmental considerations.

11. **Department and Administrative Unit Responsibilities:**

- a. Evaluate each requested product and service to determine the extent to which the specifications could include an environmentally preferable option.

- b. Determine standard(s) at which products are considered environmentally preferable based on the selective criteria contained in this procedure.
- c. Purchase recycled products with the maximum amount of recycled material practicable.
- d. Ensure that contracts issued by the departments or administrative unit include environmentally preferable products and recycled products wherever practicable.
- e. Ensure that contracts issued by the department or administrative units require the maximum practicable amount of recycled material and that contractors provide certification of this content and report amounts used.
- f. Ensure that all paper printing activities use recycled paper with a minimum recycled content as specified by the Purchasing Department.
- g. Utilize both sides of paper sheets whenever practicable in printing and copying.
- h. Expand the awareness and use of environmentally preferable products and services.

Notes:

Goal - encourage and increase the procurement of environmentally preferable products and services. It reflects a commitment to provide environmental leadership and appropriate guidance. By incorporating environmental considerations into public purchasing, the County of Ulster can help to reduce negative impacts on the local and global environment, remove unnecessary hazards from its operations, protect the public health, reduce costs and liabilities, and potentially improve the environmental quality at the workplace and in our local communities. This is an effective way to direct the County's effort in procuring environmentally preferable products and services.

Nothing in this procedure shall be construed as requiring a department, administrative unit or contractor to procure products that do not comply with General Municipal Law, perform adequately for their intended use or are not available at a reasonable price in a reasonable period of time.