

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing at Colorado State University

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) or "green" purchasing is a concept that encourages the use of environmentally friendly products and services. Colorado Revised Statute 24-103-207.5 defines "Environmentally Preferable Products" as products or services that have a lesser or reduced adverse effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. In addition, Environmentally Preferable Purchasing takes into consideration both the long- and short-term costs associated with the full life cycle of the product. The life cycle includes extraction, production, manufacturing, distribution, operation, maintenance, and disposal. Many "green" products are competitively priced with their less environmentally friendly counterparts and are of comparable quality, thereby eliminating the most justifiable reasons for not buying "green".

Here at CSU "green" purchasing starts with all of us, beginning when you are planning your purchase of goods and services.

Before buying any product or service, a number of questions should be considered:

- ✓ Can the need be met in another way?
- ✓ Is a suitable product available elsewhere in the university?
- ✓ Can the requirement be met by renting or sharing rather than purchasing?
- ✓ Is the quantity requested essential?
- ✓ Can the product serve any useful purpose after its initial use?
- ✓ Remember that the best way to help the environment is to minimize consumption.
- ✓ If it is essential to purchase, it is important when choosing products or services to consider whether alternatives are available which are less environmentally and socially damaging.

Consider all the phases of a product's life cycle when determining its cost and environmental impact. Life Cycle Analysis (LCA) is used to assess the environmental performance of a product from cradle to grave (i.e. raw material extraction, production, transportation, product use, maintenance, product disposal).

- ✓ Assess the overall environmental integrity of suppliers by looking at their policies and practices.

Examples of criteria to consider when determining potential impacts of goods and services include:

- ✓ Fit for the purpose and provide value for money
- ✓ Energy and resource efficient
- ✓ Minimum use of virgin materials
- ✓ Maximum use of post consumer materials
- ✓ Non (or reduced) polluting
- ✓ Durable, easily upgraded and repairable
- ✓ Minimum packaging
- ✓ Reusable and recyclable.

Be familiar with different terms associated with “green” purchasing:

- Pre-consumer waste: manufacturing excess and waste.
- And/or:
- Post-consumer waste: discard generated by a business or residence.
- Remanufactured: indicates the product has already been used before but has been refurbished for use.
- Recycled: product is made from a reused material.
- Recyclable: the ability of a material to be reused in manufacturing.

You should also be familiar with 3rd party certifiers or “ecolabels” such as LEED™, Energy Star®, GreenGuard®, Green Seal™, Forest Stewardship Council®, USDA Organic, etc:

- There are three types of “ecolabels”.
 - Type I: Seal of approval which looks at many attributes of the product. Example: Green Seal™.
 - Type II: Self declared and only looks at one attribute of the product. Examples: Energy Star® only looks at the energy consumption of the product and GreenGuard® only looks at the emissions released by products into the office environment.
 - Type III: Report card style. Example: Nutrition facts on food and drinks.
- Consumer Reports sponsored website with “ecolabel” logos: www.greenerchoices.org

Other helpful websites:

- www.epa.gov/epp
- www.greenseal.org

Where can you get started in making “green” purchases?

Office paper - bond paper typically used in copiers and computer printers: This is a large consumption item for the university with millions of sheets consumed each year. The ASCSU recommended to the President that the university adopt 30% post consumer waste office paper as the standard paper. In an effort to comply with the recommendation, Purchasing studied the use of this paper in several areas on campus and the feedback received found virtually no discernable difference in performance over regular #4 bond paper for the typical application. 30% PCW office paper is available through State of Colorado price agreements as well as the University Bookstore.

Look for “Ecolabels”: For example, when buying office equipment consider items that carry the Energy Star® rating. Various State of Colorado and University price agreements offer products with the Energy Star® rating as well as other 3rd party certifications or “ecolabels”.

Remanufactured printer toner cartridges: The State of Colorado has issued state price agreements with three vendors to furnish remanufactured toner cartridges for most of the printers used by state agencies. The price for remanufactured toner cartridges is considerably less than OEM cartridges, sometimes less than half.

Flat Screen monitors: While these monitors contain some hazardous materials, they are considered significantly less of a hazard than CRT monitors. Flat screen monitors typically have a longer lifespan than their CRT counterparts. In addition, they use less energy thereby reducing their life cycle environmental impact.

Dell™ Disposal Services: Available online or through your Dell Sales Representative when you purchase a new Dell desktop, notebook, workstation or printer. By purchasing Dell™ Disposal Services, your old or used equipment is recycled in a manner designed to keep environmentally sensitive materials out of landfills and those materials are recycled or reused, conserving natural resources.
http://www.dell.com/content/topics/global.aspx/services/asset_recycling/disposal?c=us&cs=RC956904&l=en&s=hied

HP Trade-In Program: The HP Trade-In program allows Higher Education customers to take advantage of market trade-in values and asset disposition best practices while reducing the cost of new HP products. http://www.hp.com/united-states/tradein/ait_main.html

Computer Systems and 80 Plus Power Supplies: Per the new Energy Star® 4.0 specification, compliant computer models must feature power supplies that are at least 80% efficient at 20%, 50% and 80% loads where as current power supplies range from 65-75% efficiency. This new specification saves up to 52% on PC power consumption.

Cleaning Products: Purchasing “green” cleaning products is an easy way to minimize harmful impacts to custodial workers and staff, improve indoor air quality and reduce water pollution. “Green” cleaning products such as general purpose cleaners, bathroom cleaners, carpet cleaners, and glass cleaners are becoming more readily available and perform equal to, or even superior to conventional cleaning products. Visit the Green Seal™ site for a current list of certified “green” cleaning products. <http://www.green Seal.org/findaproduct/index.cfm>

Small Dollar Purchases: Make your small dollar purchases “green”. Seek out products and services that meet “green” purchasing guidelines when buying with your ACARD or an AFE.

Discretionary Purchases: Partner with an Agent in the Purchasing Department to identify environmentally friendly products and services for your purchases that fall in the discretionary range (no competition required), those between \$5,000 and \$10,000 for goods and between \$5,000 and \$25,000 for services.

Writing “Green” Specifications: The Purchasing Department wants to work with university staff and students to incorporate environmentally beneficial specifications in competitive solicitations. We do have the ability to conduct competitive procurements which include environmental requirements and CRS 24-103-207.5 allows a five percent preference for the purchase of environmentally preferable products. In some cases, the preference may exceed five percent if a cost of ownership life cycle analysis establishes that long term savings will result. Please contact the Purchasing Department for details.

CSU Surplus Property: The University operates a full-time surplus property function located at the corner of Lake and Mason Streets. University departments declare furniture and equipment surplus and it is housed at CSU surplus and available for reissue to CSU departments. Visit their website <http://cr.colostate.edu/surplus/index.asp> to see if your equipment and furniture needs can be met there.