

POLICY STATEMENT

POL-1736 ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PURCHASING AND UTILIZATION (EPP)

1. Purpose

Snohomish County is a large consumer of goods and services and the purchasing decisions of our employees and contractors can have significant impacts on human health, environmental health, and social and economic stability. By including environmental considerations in our procurement decisions, along with our traditional concerns with price, performance and availability, we will remain fiscally responsible while promoting practices that improve public health and safety, reduce pollution, and conserve natural resources. The purpose of this policy is to establish the framework for an environmentally based purchasing and product utilization program for Snohomish County.

Snohomish County is committed to acquiring environmentally preferable products and services whenever they meet performance standards and requirements of the County at a competitive cost. Nothing in the policy shall be construed as requiring the procurement of products or services that do not perform adequately for their intended use, exclude adequate competition, or are not available at a reasonable price or in a reasonable period of time.

All of the Guidelines set forth in Section 8 of this policy shall be met to the greatest extent feasible and practicable for the purchase of products and services.

2. Goals

The County will support and implement this Environmentally Preferable Purchasing and Product Utilization policy (EPP) by acquiring products and services that:

- a. Use non-toxic and least harmful chemicals;
- b. Use recyclable and reusable products;
- c. Use energy and water efficient materials, products, and processes;
- d. Promote zero waste, including compostable and bio-based products;
- e. Minimize the release of greenhouse gases (GHGs) from transportation of goods and services;
- f. Conserve natural resources;
- g. Implement sustainable landscape practices;
- h. Facilitate green building construction, renovation, operation, and maintenance;
- i. Are sourced from suppliers who demonstrate in their business practices a commitment to the goals set forth in this policy;
- j. Allow for environmentally responsible utilization of the product or service;
- k. Encourage manufacturers and vendors to reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems; and
- l. Encourage manufacturers to take responsibility for their products at end of life where applicable.

In practice, the objective is to acquire products or services that have a positive impact, or minimized negative impact, on human health and the environment because of the way they are made, used, transported, stored, packaged, and disposed of. It also means acquiring products or services that do not harm human health, are less polluting, minimize waste, maximize the use of bio-based products and recyclable materials, conserve energy and water, and reduce the consumption and disposal of hazardous materials.

3. Organizations Affected

This policy applies to all Snohomish County departments, offices and agencies.

4. Definitions

Compostable Plastic - As defined by the [American Society for Testing and Measurement](#) (ASTM-D6400 & ASTM-D6868), *“is capable of undergoing biological decomposition in a compost site as part of an available program, such that the plastic is not visually distinguishable and breaks down to carbon dioxide, water, inorganic compounds, and biomass, at a rate consistent with known compostable materials (e.g. cellulose), and leaves no toxic residue.”*

Environmentally Preferable Products and Services - The acquisition of products or services (including construction), that have a positive impact (or reduced negative effect) on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.

Life Cycle Cost Assessment (LCCA) – means the evaluation of the total cost of an item to the County over its estimated useful life, including costs of selection, acquisition, operation, maintenance, and where applicable, disposal, as far as these costs can reasonably be determined, minus the salvage value at the end of its estimated useful life.

Post-Consumer Materials – A material or finished product that has served its intended use and has been diverted or recovered from waste destined for disposal, having completed its life as a consumer item. Post-consumer materials are part of the broader category of recovered materials.

Pre-Consumer Materials – Materials generated in manufacturing and converting processes, such as manufacturing scrap and trimmings/cuttings.

Recovered Materials – Waste materials and byproducts that have been recovered or diverted from solid waste, but does not include materials and byproducts generated from, and commonly reused within, an original manufacturing process.

Recyclable Product – A product, which can economically be diverted from the solid waste stream and be reused, or used as a raw material in manufacturing of another product.

Reusable Product – A product that can be used several times for an intended use before being discarded, such as a washable food or beverage container or toner cartridges that can be refilled.

5. Balancing Environmental Considerations with Performance, Availability and Cost

Snohomish County implements its commitment to making environmentally preferable purchasing decisions by making life cycle cost assessments (LCCA) a standard part of the County purchasing process. When comparing costs, the County looks at the total ownership cost over the life of the product or service; including the initial cost, maintenance, operation, insurance, disposal, recycle or replacement, expected lifetime compared to other alternatives, and potential liability costs. Certain products or services may have a higher initial purchase cost, but require less maintenance or offer lower life cycle costs. Evaluating complete life cycle costs will help us be better environmental stewards and save the County money by ensuring that we are making sound acquisition decisions based on the total cost of ownership.

Snohomish County is committed to procuring environmentally preferable products and services whenever they meet performance standards and requirements of the County at a competitive cost. Nothing in the policy shall be construed as requiring the procurement of products or services that do not perform adequately for their intended use, exclude adequate competition, or are not available at a reasonable price or in a reasonable period of time.

All of the Guidelines set forth in Section 8 shall be met to the greatest extent feasible and practicable for the purchase of products and services.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

a. County Purchasing Division Responsibilities: The County's Purchasing Division, in conjunction with the Office of Energy and Sustainability, will be responsible for:

- i. Reviewing purchase requests for compliance with this policy;
- ii. Working with other organizations, groups, and governmental agencies such as NACO and the Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN) to determine appropriate standards for green purchasing;
- iii. Assisting department staff in the evaluation of products to meet the County's EPP standards and provide guidance for the purchase of green products or services;
- iv. Assessing and making recommendations on the use of price preferences;
- v. Maintaining data and issuing reports related to the County's progress in environmental purchasing; and
- vi. Establishing central purchasing agreements with a catalog of environmentally preferred products, and to modify existing contracts and databases for easy identification of environmentally preferred products.
- vii. The Purchasing Manager will serve as the primary contact with the State for compliance with the requirements of RCW 43.19A.030.

b. County Department or Office Responsibilities: Departments shall promote the purchase of environmentally preferable products and services, and conduct LCCAs as set forth in Section 5 of this policy. Departments shall include applicable environmentally preferable specifications, standards and certifications in request for proposals, contract specifications, and with a Purchase Request.

Each County department or office is responsible for ensuring their respective employees, contractors, and vendors are aware and supportive of the County's initiative to purchase environmentally preferable goods and services. To this end, departments are responsible for exercising due diligence in their procurement decisions as well as procurements made by their contractors and consultants.

7. Compliance with Policy and Guidelines

All County departments, offices, and employees shall comply with this policy, as set forth in the code. Snohomish County's Green Product Resource Guide (Resource Guide) is a tool to help employees in the assessment and acquisition of environmentally preferable products and services that meet your needs as well as the County's sustainability goals and EPP policy. The Resource Guide is located on the Purchasing Division's internal EmWeb page and is available to assist County departments, offices, and employees in the preparation of bid specifications, contracts, and other purchases. If specifications or environmentally preferable standards for a specific product or service are not found in the Resource Guide, the employee shall contact Purchasing or the Office of Energy and Sustainability for assistance.

8. Guidelines for Environmentally Preferable Purchasing and Product Utilization

The Guidelines set forth in Section 8 shall be met to the greatest extent feasible and practicable for the specification, evaluation, purchase, and/or award process for products or services:

a. Non-Toxic and Less Harmful Chemicals

The County shall purchase products that are non-toxic or that use least harmful chemicals when compared to competing products that serve the same purpose. This policy helps to reduce negative effects on human health for workers, building occupants, and the environment.

The County shall not use cleaning or disinfecting products that contain carcinogens, mutagens, teratogens. The County shall not purchase products with ingredients that are known to cause disruption of the endocrine system, or that are persistent bioaccumulative toxins (PBTs) in the environment. Toxic chemicals that should not be purchased in any product or service include, but are not limited to:

- i. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs);
- ii. Persistent bio-accumulative toxins (PBTs);
- iii. Formaldehyde (often found in paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture, and casework);
- iv. Endocrine disrupters such as:
 - a) Flame retardants (e.g. polybromide diphenyl ethers (PBDEs)
 - b) Pesticides
 - c) Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs)
 - d) Surfactants (contain nonylphenols)
 - e) Epoxy (contain Bisphenol A)
 - f) Plastics (many contain phthalates and Bisphenol A)
- v. Toxics such as lead, asbestos, and mercury; and
- vi. The County will reduce or eliminate the purchase and use of products that contribute to the formation of dioxins and furans. This includes, but is not limited to:

- a) Paper, paper products, and janitorial paper products that are bleached or that are processed with chlorine or chlorine derivatives;
- b) Products with polyvinyl chloride (PVC) such as, but not limited to, office binders, furniture and flooring.

For more information about PBTs, visit the [EPA's PBT and Chemical Program website](#). The [U.S. EPA Toxics Release Inventory](#) and the [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health](#) should be used as resources to identify additional hazardous and toxic chemicals to avoid in purchasing products and services.

b. Recyclable and Reusable Products

The County will ensure that specifications and performance standards for goods and services do not require the use of products made from virgin materials nor specifically exclude the use of environmentally preferable products. Snohomish County will purchase and utilize products that;

- i. Are durable, long lasting, recyclable, reusable, or refillable;
- ii. Contain the highest post-consumer recycled content available; and
- iii. At a minimum, meet the minimum recycled-content standards listed in the [United States Environmental Protection Agency's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines \(CPG\)](#).

c. Energy and Water Efficient Materials, Products, and Processes

Snohomish County is committed to implementing policies and practices that conserve energy, increase the use of renewable energy, and decrease the County's greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve these goals, the County will purchase and use:

- i. Products for which Energy Star certification is available and that meet Energy Star certification. Where Energy Star certification is not available, purchase products that are in the upper 25% of energy efficiency as designated by the [US Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program \(FEMP\)](#). Visit Energy Star's website for a current list of [EnergyStar certified products and specifications](#).
- ii. Computers, monitors and laptops and other electronic equipment that meet or exceed the requirements established under the [Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool \(EPEAT\) program](#).
- iii. Energy and/or fuel-efficient vehicles, such as electric or hybrid vehicles, that meet the County's operational needs;
- iv. Energy efficient lamps and fixtures;
- v. Seek out vendors and products that use less energy and water in manufacturing and product use.

d. Promote Zero Waste

Reducing unnecessary waste at the source allows the County to both mitigate the inefficient use of natural resources and reduce handling and disposal costs. The County will institute practices that reduce waste and result in the purchase of fewer products without reducing safety or workplace quality. Guidelines for solid waste reduction include, but are not limited to:

- i. Suppliers of products such as lighting, carpet, and electronic equipment, including but not limited to computers, monitors, printers, and copiers, will

- be requested to take back equipment for reuse or environmentally safe recycling when the County discards or replaces such equipment;
- ii. Purchase products that are durable, long-life, readily recyclable, reprocessed, or reused;
- iii. Minimize or eliminate packaging, take back packaging for reuse, or use packaging that is recyclable, reusable, non-toxic, or bio-based;
- iv. Purchase products that are remanufactured, refurbished, and/or contain recycled content (particularly post-consumer material);
- v. Use electronic communication instead of printed;
- vi. Print “On-Demand” as needed using double-sided photocopying and printing;
- vii. Purchase in bulk, when storage and operations exist to support it;
- viii. Purchase concentrated products (such as cleaning products);
- ix. Re-use products such as, but not limited to, file folders, storage boxes, office supplies, and furnishings;
- x. Purchase and use washable and reusable dishes and utensils,
- xi. Purchase rechargeable batteries; and
- xii. Streamline and digitize forms.

e. Use Compostable and Bio-Based Products

Where composting is available or feasible to implement, the County will:

- i. Purchase compostable food service and kitchen precuts including, but not limited to, plates, cups, cutlery, to-go containers, and compostable bags;
- ii. Purchase products and packaging that are clearly labeled and compostable according to the compostable certification standards of local compost vendors;
- iii. Purchase products with certified to be compostable by a third party label, such as the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) label. For information about BPI, the certification program and lists of approved products see <http://www.bpiworld.org/>.

f. Minimize the Release of Greenhouse Gases from Transportation of Goods and Services

- i. The County will purchase products that minimize trip distance, and consolidate orders and deliveries.

g. Conserve Natural Resources

To reduce the consumption of natural resources, the County will purchase:

- i. Products that do not originate from rainforest hardwood or tropical wood; and
- ii. Wood and agricultural products that are sustainably grown and harvested, such as products that are certified by the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) or other independent third-party certifier.

h. Implement Sustainable Landscape Practices

Sustainable landscape practices will be used by the County to help protect ecological health. Sustainable landscape practices include, but are not limited to:

- i. Manage pest problems through prevention techniques, and physical, mechanical, and biological controls with least-toxic pest control as a last resort;

- ii. Purchase compost from a compliant facility (preferably locally produced) to deter weeds, reduce irrigation needs, and promote plant health.
- iii. Use grasscycling (leave lawn clippings on the lawn) for at least 50% of mowing;
- iv. Avoid heading, lopping, or shearing trees, shrubs, and other plants;
- v. Schedule irrigation based on weather and soil moisture. Drip irrigation is preferred;
- vi. Irrigate landscapes with harvested rainwater or recycled water;
- vii. Select plants that are climate and site appropriate, and that are native, and drought-tolerant;
- viii. Use permeable surfacing as substitutes for impermeable surfaces; and
- ix. Use energy efficient and alternative alternative energy power tools and equipment.

i. Facilitate Green Building Construction, Renovation, Operation and Maintenance

The Purchasing Division, Facilities, Management, Office of Energy and Sustainability, and other departments will work together to develop comprehensive green building standards for all County-owned facilities.

The County will develop and implement processes and procedures to ensure that green building practices are integrated into the design, construction, renovation, operation, maintenance, and deconstruction of County-owned and operated facilities.

At minimum, the construction and/or renovation of County facilities should include, but not be limited to:

- i. Building materials that are re-used, re-usable, recycled, and recyclable;
- ii. Procurement of products with the lowest amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs);
- iii. Procurement of products with low or no formaldehyde in materials such as paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture, and casework;
- iv. Recycling or disposal of building materials in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- v. Design and renovate buildings to maximize energy efficiency and resource conservation; and
- vi. A facility that will be operated and maintained in an energy and resource efficient manner.

In the mean time, the County is encouraged to use the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) silver standards as guidelines for all new County-owned building design and construction and for renovations of 5,000 square feet or more. For existing buildings, implementation of LEED Existing Building Operation and Maintenance (EBOM) standards are encouraged.

j. Independent, Third Party Labels

The County will procure products or services with an independent, credible, third-party environmental certification label. Third party labels will be used when writing specifications for, or procuring materials, products, or services, so long as such labels:

- i. Are developed and awarded by an impartial third-party;
- ii. Are developed in a public, transparent, and broad stakeholder process;
- iii. Represent specific and meaningful leadership criteria for that product or service category; and
- iv. Label standards used in product or service specifications should represent standards that take into account multiple attributes and life-cycle considerations, with claims verified by an independent third-party.

A list of credible third party labels can be found in the Resource Guide which is located on the Purchasing Division's internal EmWeb page.

9. EPP Program Implementation

The County's implementation of the EPP program will require changes in awareness, behaviors, practices and procedures. It is the County's intention, therefore, to utilize a participatory process as it implements this EPP policy and Guidelines.

To help ensure successful program implementation, the Purchasing Division and the Office of Energy and Sustainability will work together on the following:

- i. Research and evaluate opportunities to substitute environmentally preferable products;
- ii. Design and implement programs and processes for increasing the purchase of environmentally preferable products;
- iii. Host workshops to help train and educate employees;
- iv. Provide appropriate language supporting the EPP policy in the County's procurement solicitation documents and contracts with suppliers and service providers; and
- v. Provide information to facilitate the evaluation and purchase of environmentally preferable products, including identifying appropriate products, sources, and providing technical assistance.

10. County Code and State Law

It is the intent of this policy to complement County code and State law. When such code or law is update to accommodate a more rigorous standard, the policy shall be considered to likewise require such additional provision.

11. EPP by County Contractors and Grantees

Snohomish County will, to the greatest extent feasible, require all County contractors and grantees to conform to this Policy when they procure materials, products, or services to perform contractual services for the County, produce or provide a work product to the County or on the County's behalf, or conduct work funded by a grant from the County.

12. Policy Implementation and Effective Date

New county contracts and county contracts that are being amended or reviewed shall, to the greatest extent feasible, include provisions to implement this EPP policy.

PROCEDURE

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PRO-1736 ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PURCHASING AND UTILIZATION

This procedure will be used for purchase and procurement of all products, services, and construction.

- | Action By: | Action: |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Department | 1. Departments shall develop purchase requests, contract specifications, and scopes of work in accordance with the EPP policy. Departments shall send these documents to the Purchasing Division for final review. |
| Purchasing | 2. Purchasing shall review purchase requests, contract specifications, and scopes of work submitted by the requesting Department to ensure compliance with the EPP policy. |