



1997 Buy-Recycled Series Non-Paper Office Products

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



Through the Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines (CPG), the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designates items that must contain recycled content when purchased by federal, state, and local agencies or by government contractors using appropriated federal funds. Among these items, EPA has designated several non-paper office products. 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 a non-regulatory companion piece—the Recovered Materials Advisory Notice (RMAN)—that recommends levels of recycled content for these items. To make it even easier to buy recycled, EPA updates the CPG each year.

If you’re involved in purchasing office supplies, you know that creating an efficient office environment means more than having a good work force. It also means closing the recycling loop and creating a demand for the materials we collect for recycling each day. Lead by example—buy recycled office products, such as trash bags, plastic envelopes, and desktop accessories.

EcoPurchasing means considering attributes such as

- ❖ recycled content
- toxicity
- reusability
- durability
- repairability

❖ before you buy a product.





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 step 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 encourage the purchase of recycled products, the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) requires agencies to buy recycled products. In addition, President Clinton signed Executive Order 12873 in October 1993, which called for an increase in the federal government's use of recycled-content products. Developed in response to these directives, the CPG requires federal agencies to give preference to EPA-designated items made with recovered materials. This, in turn, supports recycling markets and allows recycling to continue to expand.

Issued in May 1995, the first CPG designated 19 new products in 7 product categories. Procuring agencies are required to purchase these items with recycled content. (A procuring agency is any federal, state, or local agency, or government contractor, that uses appropriated federal funds to purchase products.) A CPG update (CPG II) was published in November 1997, and designated an additional 12 items, including printer ribbons and plastic envelopes.

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.

By May 1, 1996, your agency was required to develop an affirmative procurement program (or modify its existing program) to incorporate buy-recycled requirements for recycling containers and waste receptacles, plastic desktop accessories, binders, trash bags, and toner cartridges. It is not too late to develop your affirmative procurement program if you have not already done so. This effort might involve reviewing your specifications for these products and eliminating provisions that pose barriers to procuring them with recycled content (such as aesthetic requirements unrelated to product performance). Your agency also must revise its affirmative procurement program to add the newly designated items—printer ribbons and plastic envelopes—by November 13, 1998. Also be aware that paper envelopes were designated in CPG I. Recommended recycled content ranges for this item are addressed in the RMAN for paper products.

The CPG acknowledges, however, that specific circumstances might arise that preclude the purchase of products made with recovered materials. You may purchase designated items that do not contain recovered materials if you determine 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) it does not meet your agency's reasonable performance specifications.

How Do I Purchase Recycled-Content Non-Paper Office Products?

To help agencies comply with the buy-recycled requirements, EPA also 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 that 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 *Non-Paper Office Products Containing Recovered Materials* for a list of sources of the designated items.

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 is purchasing 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>



EPA's Recommended Content Levels for Non-Paper Office Products

Non-Paper Office Product ¹	Recovered Material Content Recommendations
Recycling Containers and Waste Receptacles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plastic - Steel - Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Corrugated - Solid Fiber Boxes - Industrial Paperboard 	20 – 100% (postconsumer) 25 – 100% 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plastic-covered - Paper-covered - Pressboard 	25 – 50% 75 – 100% (postconsumer)/90 – 100% (total) 20% (postconsumer)/50% (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)

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

How Do I Get More Information?



Information Available From EPA

This fact sheet and the following publications on buying recycled products are available in electronic format on the Internet at

<http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/>

procure.htm. 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: rcra-docket@epamail.epa.gov. Text of the following *Federal Register* notices can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/fedrgstr/search.htm>. Search by specific day, by keywords, or by accessing the Government Printing Office database.

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., EST.

- ❖ **EPA Issues Comprehensive Procurement Guideline** (EPA530-F-95-010). This 4-page 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. *Federal Register* notices promulgating CPG II (62 FR 60961/EPA530-Z-97-009) and the RMAN II (62 FR 60975/EPA530-Z-97-010), November 13, 1997.
- ❖ **Non-Paper Office Products Containing Recovered Materials** (EPA530-B-97-011). This list identifies manufacturers and suppliers of non-paper 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 homepage at <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/p2home>.



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 free of charge. For more information, contact Bonnie Fedchock, National Recycling Coalition, 1727 King Street, Suite 105, Alexandria, VA 22314-2720. Phone: 703 683-9025, Ext. 209. Fax: 703 683-9026.

- ❖ **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, including printer toner cartridges. For more information, call 800 352-2852 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. Homepage: <http://www.dscr.dla.mil>.

- ❖ **General Services Administration.** 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: 817 334-5227. You can also access *GSA Advantage!*, GSA's Internet-based online ordering system, to order any GSA product at <https://www.fss.gsa.gov/cgi-bins/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.
- **New Item Introductory Schedule.** Lists recycled reloaded printer ribbons 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.

In addition, GSA makes a limited number of toner cartridges available through its stock program and most customer supply centers. For technical information, contact Patricia Miller, Marketing Director, at 703 305-3044 or fax 703 305-7135. GSA also offers binders and plastic trash bags that meet EPA recovered content recommendations, as stock items through its general catalog. For further information, contact John Marrone, Engineering Branch, at 212 264-3578.

- ❖ **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, 401 M Street, SW. (Mail Code 1600), Washington, DC 20460. Phone: 202 260-1297. Fax: 202 401-9503. Homepage: <http://www.ofee.gov>.
- ❖ **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 site at http://fcn.state.fl.us/bpsr/drc_notice.html. For more information, contact George C. Banks, DRC Coordinator, Florida

How Do I Get More Information? (Continued)

Department of Management Services, 4050 Esplanade Way, Suite 335, Tallahassee, FL 32399-0950. Phone: 850 921-7852. Fax: 850 921-5979. E-mail: banksg@dms.mail.ufl.edu.

- ❖ **National Institute of Governmental Purchasing (NIGP).** NIGP maintains a library of product specifications and sample bid documents for both virgin- and recycled-content products, including reinked and reloaded printer ribbons. It also offers procurement training workshops for members. For more information, contact Fuad Abu-Taleb, 11800 Sunrise Valley Drive, Suite 1050, Reston, VA 22091. Phone: 703 715-9400, Ext. 241. Fax: 703 715-9897.
- ❖ **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. For more information, contact the 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, including trash bags, binders, and recycling containers, from approximately 300 manufacturers. 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 homepage at <http://www.plasticsresource.com>.
- ❖ **Resource Guide to Business Products Manufacturers' Recycling Products and Program.** Provides information on how to purchase recycled-content office products. The guide costs \$20 for members and \$40 for nonmembers. To obtain a copy, contact the Business Products Industry Association, 301 North Fairfax Street, Alexandria VA 22314. Phone: 800 542-6672 or 703 549-9040.
- ❖ **Unicor.** Provides remanufactured toner cartridges. Contact Federal Prison Industry, Customer Service Center, P.O. Box 13640, Lexington, KY 40583-3640. Phone: 800 827-3168. Fax: 606 254-9692.



Internet Sites

- ❖ **California Recycled-Content Product Database:** <http://www.ciwmb.ca.gov/mrt/rcp/rcp.htm>. 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.
- ❖ **King County Recycled Product Procurement Program:** <http://www.metrokc.gov/oppis/recyclea.html>. This site describes the tools and techniques developed by King County, Washington, agencies for purchasing recycled products.
- ❖ **The Procurement Assistance Jumpstation:** <http://www.fedmarket.com/procinet.html>. This site contains links to many sites containing procurement information.
- ❖ **Reduce, Reuse, Recycle...Through Procurement:** <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/procure.htm>. 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.

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
401 M Street, SW. (5306W)
Washington, DC 20460

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use
\$300