

Green Purchasing Guide

Striving to minimize our environmental impact
by promoting responsible and sustainable purchasing choices.

Introduction

The purpose of the Green Purchasing Guide is to help minimize our impact on the environment by promoting responsible and sustainable purchasing choices. This guide highlights information on waste reduction, *green* product criteria and common *green* labels and symbols. It also provides links and resources to common suppliers that offer green product choices. An electronic version of this guide is available online at _____ and will be updated periodically.

Thanks for all you do to make our community a greener, more sustainable place to live, work and play!

Before You Buy

Before buying any products or services, here are a few things to consider:

- Is the product or service necessary?
- Is an alternative product available elsewhere in our organization?
- 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?
- What is the product's lifespan? How long can it be used?

Choosing a Product

When choosing a product, individuals should purchase (where feasible and fiscally prudent) products that have the least damaging and/or most beneficial impact on the environment.

Also consider a product's lifecycle (production, transportation, maintenance, disposal, etc.) when determining its cost and environmental impact. Look at the environmental reputation of suppliers by examining their policies and practices, including corporate responsibility and whether they promote business opportunities for disadvantaged or women-owned businesses in our local community.

Factors to be considered when purchasing a good or service include:

- Appropriate and cost effective
- Energy and resource efficient
- Useful life: durable, repairable, upgradable
- Reusable and recyclable
- Minimum use of virgin materials (conserves natural resources)
- Use of post-consumer materials (recycled content)
- Minimum packaging to reduce materials put in landfills
- Products made with or containing harmful chemicals (chlorine bleached paper products, persistent bioaccumulative toxins, or BPAs in plastics)

Things to Look For

Many suppliers use symbols and labels to specify which of their products are environmentally friendly, or *green*. Below is a list of symbols and labels that are widely recognized as *green* product indicators. Watch out for other labels not in this list, some are invented without any verifiable requirements or certifications!



Design for the Environment allows manufacturers to put the DfE label on household and commercial products, such as cleaners and detergents, that meet stringent criteria for human and environmental health.



EcoLogo™ is a Type I eco-label, that compares products/services with others in the same category, develops rigorous and scientifically relevant criteria that reflect the entire lifecycle of the product, and awards the EcoLogo to those that are verified by an independent third party as complying with the criteria.



ENERGY STAR is the trusted, government-backed symbol for energy efficiency helping us all save money and protect the environment through energy-efficient products and practices.



EPEAT is a system that helps purchasers evaluate, compare and select electronic products based on their environmental attributes. The system currently covers desktop and laptop computers, thin clients, workstations and computer monitors.



The **Fair Trade Certified™** Label guarantees consumers that strict economic, social and environmental criteria were met in the production and trade of an agricultural product.



FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not-for-profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world's forests.



Green-e is the nation's leading independent consumer protection program for the sale of renewable energy and greenhouse gas reductions in the retail market. Green-e offers certification and verification of renewable energy and greenhouse gas mitigation products.



Green Seal is an independent, non-profit organization that uses science-based standards and the power of the marketplace to create a more sustainable world.



ISO 14001, which stands for International Organization for Standardization, promotes the development and implementation of voluntary international standards, both for particular products and for environmental management issues.



LEED is an internationally recognized green building certification system providing third-party verification that a building or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at improving performance across all the metrics that matter most: energy savings, water efficiency, CO₂ emissions reduction, improved indoor environmental quality, and stewardship of resources and sensitivity to their impacts.



Mobius is the internationally recognized recycling symbol. Each one of the 3 arrows represents an aspect of a successful recycling program: collection, remanufacturing/reprocessing into a new product, and finally purchase by the consumer. This symbol has many meanings, sometimes it denotes that an item is *recyclable*, while other times it means the product is *made from recycled content*.



WaterSense is an EPA-sponsored partnership program that seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by promoting water efficiency and enhancing the market for water-efficient products, programs, and practices.



Where to Get Started

Listed below are a few common suppliers that offer green product choices. By clicking on the links in the electronic PDF version of this guide, you will be taken directly to the supplier's web site.



www.grainger.com



www.greenworkscleaners.com



www.homedepot.com



www.kelsan.biz



www.lowes.com



www.officedepot.com



www.officemax.com



www.simplegreen.com



www.spartanchemical.com



www.staples.com

Helpful Examples

Now that you know how to choose a product, what labels to look for and where to shop for green items, here are a few helpful tips and examples of how to put all this knowledge to use:

Reduce

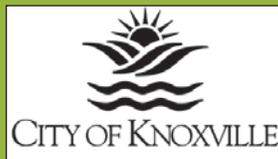
- Reduce your waste by not purchasing things you don't need.
- Reduce the need to buy new electronics - like a computer, printer or cellphone - by purchasing the best quality technology available for a reasonable price, so it will have a longer useful life (planned obsolesces).
- Reduce waste by printing and writing on both sides of paper and using scrap paper instead of sticky notes.

Reuse

- Reuse cups, coffee mugs and other containers in your office instead of buying disposable ones.
- Reuse files, folders and envelopes when possible, especially for internal communications and exchanges.
- Reuse pens and pencils by purchasing ones that are refillable.
- Reuse signage and banners by purchasing these items without date and time specific information printed on them.
- Contact other departments in your organization about surplus items they might have that you could reuse instead of purchasing new (ex: printers, fax machines, phones, file cabinets, office chairs, etc.)

Recycle

- Recycle your office paper and purchase new paper that's made with recycled content.
- Buy post-consumer recycled goods, which support local recycling programs.
- Purchase items that you know can be easily recycled in your office or community recycling program (consult your local Solid Waste Office for more detailed information).



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Knox County Solid Waste - Knox Recycles,
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