



Sustainable Purchasing

Sustainable purchasing, or green procurement, is the purchase of products and services that can minimize negative impacts on the environment and human health by ensuring products that:

- Reduce toxicity
- Conserve natural resources, materials and energy
- Maximize recyclability and recycled content

A sustainable procurement policy usually specifies the recycled content of purchased items, such as stationery or toner cartridges. By incorporating environmental standards into your existing procurement policy, you are sending the message to your suppliers, employees and other stakeholders that your business is serious about waste reduction.

What goes in to a sustainable purchasing plan?

- **Purchase recycled paper** - look for post-consumer recycled content
- **Look at ways to reduce packaging** - talk to suppliers about reducing excess packaging and ask them to take back shipping boxes and pallets. This will help reduce disposal costs for your business and increase transportation efficiency organic compounds can adversely affect indoor air quality, worker safety and the environment
- **Create purchasing guidelines** - inform your suppliers and your employees of these guidelines. They may have ideas that can help you to implement the guidelines
- **Buy durable, reusable, high-quality supplies** - such as reusable toner cartridges, rechargeable batteries or refillable pens. These products will last longer and help delay replacement and disposal costs
- **Buy supplies in bulk** - this reduces transportation costs, packaging and uses less energy
- **Purchase EnergyStar-rated office equipment** - such as computers, printers, photocopiers and appliances
- **Use non-toxic chemicals and cleaners** - products containing hazardous compounds and volatile
- **Use non-disposable products** - keep your office kitchen stocked with cutlery, dishes and coffee mugs



Create an electronic newsletter to keep your green-minded employees up to date

Join the Recycling Council of BC online for news, events and more.



The International Institute for Sustainable Development has an online guide available to help you develop a green procurement policy: <http://www.iisd.org/markets/procurement/>

