

Work Green

You can help conserve resources and improve our work environments by selecting Environmentally Preferable (EP) Products. These products use resources more effectively and create less pollution than others.

EP Characteristics

Some of these qualities may be found, depending on the product:

- Energy efficiency
- Durability
- Recycled content
- Low/zero air emissions & hazardous substances
- Water efficiency
- Easy, non-hazardous maintenance
- End-of-life management keeps materials out of landfills (e.g., reuse, recycling, return to manufacturers)
- Low life cycle cost
- Responsible manufacturing
- Packaging and distribution efficiency

Examples of EPP

- 100 percent postconsumer recycled-content, Processed Chlorine Free (PCF) paper
- Energy Star equipment & appliances
- LCD computer monitors
- Remanufactured, low air emission paint
- Low VOC water based adhesives and paint
- Zero formaldehyde emitting composite wood products
- Odorless and non-toxic water based markers and correction fluid
- Low mercury, fluorescent lighting
- Solar calculators (no batteries!)
- Polybrominated Diphenyl Ether-free (PBDE) upholstery and electronic equipment
- Green Seal approved cleaning products
- Furniture on the State's Open Panel Systems Furniture contract
- Services—such as “Green Lodging”—that meet or exceed a threshold of environmental performance

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP)

ENVIRONMENT +
PRICE +
PERFORMANCE

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California's Challenge

Each year our State's population increases by about 600,000 people. This continued growth creates more demand for water, energy and other resources, as well as increases pollution and waste. To help ensure a better future, we need to use our resources more effectively.

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) is the procurement of goods and services that have a reduced impact on human health and the environment compared to competing products serving the same purpose. EPP is also the law. California Public Contract Code sections 12400-12404 (AB 498, Chan, Chapter 575, Statutes of 2002) requires State government to practice EPP. It is an essential part of our search for high quality products and services at competitive prices.

How Do I Purchase Environmentally Preferable Products via State Contracts?

1 Compare product descriptions.

- In catalogs, look for the recycling logo.
- Look for descriptive words such as *postconsumer content, water based, odorless, fragrance free, non-toxic, Energy Star certified.*



While these words alone do not assure an environmentally desirable product, they may indicate benefits over other similar products without these descriptions.

2 Ask a few basic questions.

When comparing products, consider which product has the:

- Greatest durability
- Highest postconsumer recycled content
- No or low odors
- No or low volatile organic compound (VOC) air emissions
- Lowest energy use
- Fewest batteries (batteries are a universal waste, meaning they require special waste management)
- Lowest water consumption
- Multi-functions (one product does the job of two, eliminating an extra purchase)
- Easiest maintenance and repair
- Lowest life cycle cost
- Least amount of waste created. The packaging and/or product can be recycled at work.
- Least toxic or hazardous substances. See if there is a Materials Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). A Web search for the product name and "MSDS" will likely show if a MSDS exists. While some products and hazards are exempt from MSDS, it can provide some insight about the toxic or hazardous substances in a product.
- Seek expert advice (see *Additional resources*)

3 Make a Selection

The item with the lowest price may not be best value. Consider the life cycle costs. This includes various long term costs associated with ownership (e.g., energy, water, replacement parts, waste management).

Additional Resources are Available at these Web Sites:

Green California Web site, *EPP Best Practices Manual*: www.green.ca.gov/EPP/

California Integrated Waste Management Board
EPP Web site: www.ciwmb.ca.gov/EPP/

U.S. EPA EPP Tools Suite (includes access to database of sample specifications and training materials):
www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/tools/toolsuite.htm

www.green.ca.gov