

# Environmental Purchasing Policy

## 1.0 PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES

The goal of this policy is to encourage and increase the use of environmentally preferable products and services in San Mateo County. By including environmental considerations in purchasing decisions, San Mateo County can promote practices that improve public and worker health, conserve natural resources, and reward environmentally conscious manufacturers, while remaining fiscally responsible.

The policy objectives are to:

- a) expand the purchase of environmentally preferable products;
- b) identify environmentally preferable alternatives;
- c) recommend as goals for San Mateo County operations, the adoption of alternative processes, where practicable, that will reduce the use/disposal of hazardous substances and will promote resource conservation; and
- d) collect and maintain up-to-date information regarding manufacturers, vendors, and other sources for locating/ordering environmentally preferable products.

## 2.0 NEED

Local and state government, combined, purchase more than \$1 trillion of goods and services each year. Many of these products contribute to problems in the overall environment, including contamination of the air and water, and depletion of environmental resources. In some instances, products require special waste disposal and reporting procedures which can be cumbersome and expensive. Furthermore, local government employees using these products may be exposed to compounds that are potentially harmful to their health.

San Mateo County has an opportunity to serve as a community model for environmental leadership by incorporating a plan of action that will conserve precious resources such as water, raw materials, and energy, reduce the use of hazardous substances, and potentially improve the environmental quality of the region. By incorporating environmental considerations in public purchasing, San Mateo County can reduce its burden on the local and global environment, remove unnecessary hazards from its operations, protect public health, reduce costs and liabilities, and help develop markets for environmentally responsible products.

## 3.0 RESEARCH, EVALUATION, IMPLEMENTATION

An Environmental Purchasing Committee will be composed of representatives from various County departments to research, evaluate, and implement the environmental purchasing objectives. The Committee will focus its research, evaluation and implementation on the following areas:

- **Recycled Content Products** (e.g. paper, playground equipment, motor oil, carpets, plastic lumber)
- **Less Harmful and Non-toxic Materials and Processes**(e.g. janitorial products, pest management chemicals, phosphates, paint)
- **Energy and Water Efficient Products and Processes** (e.g. energy efficient lighting, appliances, vehicles and equipment)
- **Natural Resource and Landscaping Management** (e.g. integrated pest and vegetation management, drought tolerant plants)
- **Renewable Products** (e.g. certified forests, renewable energy resources)
- **Disposal and Pollution Reduction** (e.g. integrated waste management, milk/soda machines, double-sided copies, longer lasting tires, reusable holiday trees)
- **Packaging** (e.g. bulk packaging, reusable boxes, shipping pallets, etc.)
- **Green Building Program** (e.g. using recycled products in construction and renovation, disposal of building materials in an environmentally sensitive manner, designing and renovating for energy and resource conservation)

The Committee is aware that the evaluation and implementation phases of the project will require changes in awareness, behaviors, practices and procedures. To the extent possible it is the Committee's intention to have a participative process as it researches, evaluates and implements the policy recommendations. It is also the Committee's intention to meet annually after implementation to monitor and evaluate the County's progress.

#### 4.0 SPECIFICATIONS

##### **Recycled Content Products**

- To the extent practicable, all printing and copy paper products shall meet U.S. EPA guidelines for post-consumer recycled fiber content.
- To the extent practicable, all janitorial paper products shall meet U.S. EPA guidelines for post-consumer content.
- All re-refined oil must be American Petroleum Institutes certified. The Public Works Department will conduct a pilot program for a designated portion of the motor vehicle fleet using motor oil containing a minimum 25% re-refined base stock. The County shall expand the pilot to all fleets, if successful.
- Where practicable, all motor vehicles operated shall use recycled propylene glycol antifreeze.
- Carpets purchased by the County shall consist of recycled material and shall contain the lowest volatile organic compound (voc) content available in its installation system.

- All playground equipment, including rubberized cover surfacing, shall consist of recycled-content materials consistent with U.S. EPA guidelines, where practicable.
- Any other products with recycled content used by the County which are not identified in this policy shall meet the U.S. EPA recommendations and specification guidelines for recycled content.
- If the State of California adopts recommendations and specification guidelines for recycled content products that are more stringent than the U.S. EPA guidelines, the County of San Mateo will follow the State guidelines.
- Board of Supervisors Resolution 54624 gives a 10% price preference for recycled content products.

### **Less Harmful and Non-Toxic Materials and Processes**

- To the extent practicable, no cleaning or disinfecting products (i.e. for janitorial or automotive use) shall contain ingredients that are identified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency or the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health as carcinogens, mutagens, or teratogens.
- The use of chlorofluorocarbon containing refrigerants, solvents and other products shall be phased out to accommodate the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, and national requirements. Each new purchase will comply with the protocol.
- All surfactants shall meet U.S. EPA standards as “readily biodegradable.” Where practicable, no detergents shall contain phosphates.
- All paint used in San Mateo County shall contain the minimum amount necessary of volatile organic compounds, and/or shall contain maximum recycled content where practicable.
- The County shall reduce or eliminate its use of products that contribute to the formation of dioxin and furan compounds. To the extent practicable processed chlorine-free or less bleached paper shall be purchased for photo-copy-grade and janitorial paper products. The 10% price preference applies to the purchase of chlorine-free paper. Additionally, the County shall eliminate the use of Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) plastics to the extent practicable.

### **Energy and Water Efficient Products and Processes**

- Where practicable, purchased or leased electronic equipment including photocopiers, computers, printers, lighting systems, HVAC, kitchen and laundering appliances, and energy management systems must meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) or U.S.

Department of Energy (DOE) energy efficiency standards. Where applicable, the energy efficiency function must remain enabled on all energy-efficient equipment.

### **Natural Resource and Landscaping Management**

*The specifications below will require significant change in County practices.*

- The County shall implement an integrated pest management program for pest control. Any chemicals used to eliminate or deter insect pests and undesirable vegetation shall be the most readily and completely biodegradable product available for the given application, and shall be applied in a manner that is least likely to come into contact with humans and any other animals for which treatment is not intended.
- The County shall implement a Vegetation Management Program. The program will develop a policy to utilize drought-resistant, native, and less chemically dependent plant species.

### **Renewable Products**

- The County shall not procure products that originate from rainforest hardwood or tropical wood.
- To the extent practicable, the County will use products from certified forests.

### **Disposal and Pollution Reduction**

- The County shall implement an integrated waste management program consistent with the waste management hierarchy set forth in state law (AB 939); that is, waste prevention and reuse (source reduction) first, followed by recycling and composting, with only the residual being disposed of as trash or garbage. Recycling programs are currently available at the County for paper, telephone books, laser-jet cartridges, wood pallets, scrap metal, batteries, glass and plastic bottles, and aluminum cans. The County will evaluate and implement, where practicable, expansions of and additions to the current programs in order to increase waste diversion.
- All departments, offices, and agencies shall ensure that they and their contractors/consultants use double-sided copying. Where practicable, all photocopiers and printers acquired by the County following adoption of this policy are required to be capable of double-sided copying.
- Preference shall be given to products that are reusable or refillable rather than disposable, long-lasting, durable, and which are able to be recycled or composted at the end of their life. A pre-purchase review shall be done before purchasing disposable or single-use items to determine their necessity and to compare these items to long lasting, reusable or refillable alternatives.
- Occasional use items shall be shared to the extent practicable.

- Preference shall be given to the lightest, smallest, most durable product that will complete the task (e.g. photocopiers, microwaves, etc.).
- For large purchases, life-cycle cost analysis shall be taken into consideration for cost comparisons of alternative products. Life-cycle cost analysis includes an assessment of a product's maintenance, energy and water use, and disposal costs.
- San Mateo County Health Center will examine the feasibility of using reprocessed medical and surgical products (non-invasive), to help reduce medical and surgical waste from single use products utilized in the hospital.

### **Packaging**

- To the extent practicable, the County shall require packaging to be reusable, recyclable or compostable. Items purchased shall be bulk-packed if possible and shrink wrap shall be avoided.
- Vendors shall be encouraged to take back and reuse pallets and packaging materials.
- Purchasing will work with vendors to ensure the most effective packaging of products.

### **Green Building Program**

- The County shall implement a green building program.

## **5.0 PERFORMANCE, PRICE, AND AVAILABILITY**

Nothing contained in this policy shall be construed as requiring a department or contractor to procure products that do not perform adequately for their intended use, exclude adequate competition, or are not available at a reasonable price in a reasonable period of time. The County is aware that there is an increased cost to purchase environmentally friendly products.