

# PIERCE COUNTY

## Environmental Purchasing Policy

### I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support the purchase of recycled and environmentally preferred products in order to minimize environmental impacts relating to our work and to minimize toxics, pollution, and hazards to our workers and community. The County recognizes our employees can make a difference in favor of environmental quality. We strongly recommend the purchase of environmentally preferable products whenever they perform satisfactorily and are available at a reasonably competitive price. All County agencies/departments/divisions shall adopt and promote the use of recycled/recyclable supplies and materials as an agency priority. In so doing, the County shall:

1. Encourage purchasers and employees to consider first whether there is an alternative to purchasing a product - can a task be performed another way or do we have items on hand that suffice for the task prior to a purchase?
2. Encourage waste prevention, recycling, market development and use of recycled/recyclable materials through lease agreements, contractual relationships and purchasing practices with vendors, contractors, businesses and other governmental agencies.
3. Adopt waste prevention, recycling and use of recycled supplies/materials as an Agency priority.
4. Generate less waste material by reviewing how supplies, materials and equipment are manufactured, purchased, packaged, delivered, used, and disposed.
5. Eliminate or reduce toxics that create hazards to our workers and community.
6. Serve as a model for the region to influence waste prevention, recycling and procurement efforts.
7. Reduce the County's frequency of use, and dependence on, petroleum based products.

### II. Definitions

"Recycling" means the process of collecting, sorting, cleansing, treating, and reconstituting materials that would otherwise become solid waste, and returning them to the economic mainstream in the form of raw material for new, reused, or reconstituted products which meet the quality standards necessary to be used in the marketplace.

"Waste Prevention" means any action undertaken by an individual or organization to eliminate or reduce the amount or toxicity of materials before they enter the municipal solid waste stream. This action is intended to conserve resources, promote efficiency, and reduce pollution.

"Environmentally Preferable Products" means products that have a lesser impact on human health and the environment when compared with competing products. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation and/or disposal of the product.

"Hybrid vehicles" mean a vehicle that uses two or more distinct power sources to propel the vehicle. The term most commonly refers to Hybrid-electric vehicles (HEV) which include internal combustion engines and electric motors.



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“Post-consumer material” means material that has served its intended end-use and been discarded by a final consumer.

“Pre-consumer material,” or post-industrial waste, includes industrial scrap, manufacturing waste, and/or other waste that otherwise would not have been utilized.

“Recycled Products” are products manufactured with waste material that has been recovered or diverted from the waste stream, typically designated as a percentage of post-consumer or pre-consumer material.

“Practical” means sufficient in performance and reasonably available at a reasonably competitive cost.

### III. Policies

- A. County agency personnel will specify recycled and environmentally preferable products whenever practical.
- B. County agencies shall solicit the use of recycled and other environmentally preferred products in its procurement documents as appropriate.
- C. County agencies/departments/divisions shall practice waste prevention whenever practical.
- D. County agencies/departments/divisions shall reduce the amount of use of petroleum products.

### IV. Best Practices

#### A. Procurement Practices

In cooperation with their customers, all County agencies/departments/divisions shall evaluate, at least, the following environmentally preferable product categories and purchase them whenever practical.

- 1. Printing and Writing Papers, including all imprinted letterhead paper, envelopes, copy paper and business cards. When practical, these shall contain a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content and be processed without chlorine.
- 2. Paper Products, including janitorial supplies, shop towels, hand towels, facial tissue, toilet paper, seat covers, corrugated boxes, file boxes, hanging file folders and other products comprised largely of paper.
- 3. Remanufactured laser printer toner cartridges and remanufactured or refillable ink-jet cartridges.
- 4. Re-refined antifreeze, including on-site antifreeze recycling.
- 5. Re-refined lubricating and hydraulic oils.
- 6. Recycled plastic outdoor-wood substitutes, including plastic lumber, benches, fencing, signs and posts.
- 7. Wood products that are certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
- 8. Recycled-content construction, building and maintenance products, including plastic lumber, carpet, tiles and insulation.



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9. Building products, materials and furnishings that do not adversely impact indoor air quality, especially those that meet a third-party standard, such as Green Seal
10. Re-crushed cement concrete aggregate and asphalt.
11. Cement and asphalt concrete containing tire rubber, glass cullet, recycled fiber, plastic, fly ash, recycled asphalt paving, recycled asphalt shingles, or other alternative products.
12. Re-treaded tires and products made from recycled tire rubber including rubberized asphalt, playground surfaces and fatigue mats.
13. Compost, mulch, and other organics including recycled biosolid products.
14. Native and drought-tolerant plants that require little or no watering once established.
15. Permeable substitutes to impervious surfaces, such as permeable paving and pavers for walkways, patios, and driveways.
16. Re-manufactured paint.
17. Hybrid vehicles
18. Energy-efficient equipment that meets U.S. EPA Energy Star certification when available, or is in the upper 25% of energy efficiency as designated by the Federal Energy Management Program.
19. Other products that may be designated by the Purchasing Manager.

### B. Waste Prevention Practices

County staff is encouraged to reduce their consumption of resources by incorporating the following practices into their daily activities. Accomplishment of these activities will be coordinated with the help of appropriate staff and resources such as the County's information technology, facilities management, and purchasing staff.

1. Investigate whether products are durable, refillable, reusable, and repairable.
2. Consider short and long-term costs in comparing product alternatives whenever possible, rather than just initial cost. Calculate the costs associated with product warranties, operation, maintenance, disposal, and replacement.
3. Conduct routine maintenance on products/equipment to increase the useful life.
4. Use duplex features on laser printers and copiers. Specify duplex on print jobs.
5. Create electronic letterhead for use by all County agency/departments/divisions.
6. Send and store information electronically when possible. This includes e-mail, website and electronic fax.
7. Send the traditional "cc's" electronically and discourage printing file copies.
8. Review record retention policies and implement document imaging systems.
9. Other waste prevention practices that further the goals of this policy.
10. Encourage vendors to eliminate or use minimal packaging.
11. Encourage vendors to take back pallets and other packaging materials whenever possible.

### **V. Responsibilities**

Each County agency/department/division shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy and shall:

- A. Practice waste prevention whenever possible.
- B. Continue to utilize recycling programs and expand them where possible.



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- C. Procure recycled products whenever practical.
- D. Develop, evaluate, and maintain information about environmentally preferable and/or recycled products containing the maximum practical amount of recycled materials. Share information with other agencies/departments/division when the potential for use of a product exists.
- E. Develop specifications used in public bidding aimed at eliminating barriers to recycled content products, such as outdated or overly-stringent product specifications and specifications not related to product performance.
- F. Ensure that procurement documents issued by the agencies/departments/divisions require environmental preferred alternatives whenever practical.
- G. Educate and promote this policy through appropriate staff and the use of your agency/department/division sustainability representative. This will include documentation of successes, pitfalls, changes, etc.
- H. Provide to-be-identified information for the purpose of producing a County-wide annual report that includes procurement data from all departments; an account of the current status of product evaluations conducted by departments; assesses policy effectiveness; evaluates policy goals; and makes recommendations for changes to the procurement policy.

### **VI. Responsibilities of Budget and Finance - Purchasing Division**

Purchasing shall:

- A. Maintain and use information furnished by its customers (department and agency staff) about environmentally preferable and recycled products containing the maximum practical amount of recycled materials and encourage the agencies/departments/divisions to purchase such products whenever possible. Initially, these shall include the products designated in Section IV (A) of this policy.
- B. Provide agencies/departments/divisions with vendor furnished information about recycled products and environmental procurement opportunities.
- C. Inform vendors of our Environmental Purchasing Policy.
- D. Structure applicable procurement documents to offer and/or feature recycled-content products whenever possible, (e.g., office supplies, lubricating oils and janitorial supplies).
- E. Encourage development of specifications used in public bidding aimed at eliminating barriers to recycled-content products, such as outdated or overly-stringent product specifications and specifications not related to product performance. All requests for proposals shall encourage vendors to offer recycled products whenever practical.

### **VII. Exemption**

Nothing in this policy shall be construed as requiring the purchase of products that do not perform adequately and/or are not reasonably available at a reasonable cost.

