



# STANDARD PROCEDURE

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|--|--|---|------------|---|-------------|
| <br><b>COUNTY OF DURHAM, N.C.</b> | <b>MANUAL</b><br><b>FINANCE DEPARTMENT/PURCHASING</b><br><b>DIVISION</b><br><b>PURCHASING MANUAL</b> |   |            |   |             |
|  | <b>SUBJECT</b><br><b>Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Policy</b>                                 | <b>POLICY NUMBER</b><br><b>4130-5</b>   | <b>REV</b> | <b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b><br><b>9/04/09</b>   | <b>PAGE</b> |
|  | <b>SUPERSEDES</b>  | <b>PREPARED BY:</b><br><b>PURCHASING MANAGER</b><br><i>County Manager Signature</i> |            | <b>APPROVED BY:</b><br><b>FINANCE DIRECTOR</b><br> |             |

## 1.0 PURPOSE:

Durham County is a very large consumer of goods and services and the purchasing decisions of our employees and contractors can positively or negatively affect the environment. By including environmental considerations in our procurement decisions, along with our traditional concerns with price, performance and availability, we will remain fiscally responsible while promoting practices that improve public health and safety, reduce pollution, and conserve natural resources. The purpose of this document is to establish the framework for a sustainability-based purchasing program for Durham County.

By encouraging and promoting the purchase of environmentally friendly products whose quality, function, and cost are equal or superior to more traditional products, we can:

- conserve natural resources
- minimize pollution
- reduce the use of natural resources such as water and energy
- eliminate or reduce environmental health hazards to workers and our community
- support strong recycling markets
- reduce materials that are landfilled
- increase the use and availability of environmentally preferable products
- reward vendors who reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems or services
- create a model for successfully purchasing environmentally preferable products that encourages other purchasers in our community to adopt similar goals
- educate ourselves, our vendors, and our end users

It is not the intent of this policy to require a department or contractor to: take any action that conflicts with local, state or federal requirements; procure products that do not perform adequately for their intended use; exclude adequate competition; or pursue products not available at a reasonable price in a reasonable period of time.

## 2.0 BACKGROUND:

Durham County strives to be a responsible environmental leader. Several policies and plans are in place to guide decisions and actions that will reduce our environmental impact including the Durham County Solid Waste Management Plan, Durham Local Action Plan for Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, and the Durham County High Performance Building Policy. This Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Policy will complement those efforts and help Durham County reach our environmental goals.

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## 3.0 POLICY:

All County departments shall take every reasonable effort to purchase environmentally responsible products. Products purchased shall be made with recycled, non-toxic, and/or recyclable materials that minimize environmentally harmful processes and products in their production and use and that are energy and water efficient, as long as those items meet or exceed specifications and required quality levels set forth by the County.

## 4.0 DEFINITIONS:

1. Environmentally Responsible - Products or product usage procedures which are acknowledged to have minimal impact on the environment. Such products or procedures should reduce environmental impact through their composition and/or recyclability or by reduction in quantity and toxicity of waste products, energy use or water consumption.
2. Fiscally Responsible - The cost factor or purchase price for recycled products, or for more environmentally responsible items, should be consistent with a suggested variance of 10% above the acquisition cost for similar or less environmentally responsible items. Additional costs should be counter balanced by savings from improved usage procedures.
3. Recycled Product(s) - Products made with an identifiable percentage (1% - 100%) of post consumer material content or of discarded virgin materials salvaged from the industrial waste stream. High-content recycled products contain a minimum of 50% of post consumer material.
4. Waste Reduction - The act of avoiding, eliminating and reducing the amount of solid waste at the source of generation, at the point of usage and at the time of its discard.
5. Non-Toxic Product(s) - Any item which is not considered hazardous waste and that does not otherwise pose a threat to short or long-term human health during its use.
6. Energy-Efficient Product(s) – Products that meet the US Environmental Protection Agency’s Energy Star qualifications or US Department of Energy’s Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) and vehicles that meet the US Environmental Protection Agency’s SmartWay qualifications.
7. Life-Cycle Cost – The total cost of a product including procurement, use, maintenance, and disposal.

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5.0 ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED CRITERIA:

**A. Recyclable and Non-Toxic Products:**

1. County departments shall purchase and use recycled paper (minimum 20% post-consumer recycled content) for all documents whenever possible. Documents printed on recycled paper shall include the recycling symbol when possible. This applies to documents and business cards made by outside vendors. Paper products should be processed chlorine-free, whenever possible.
2. When purchases are necessary, strong consideration shall be given to durable items, items having minimal packaging, items that can be reused, and items that are recyclable when discarded.
3. County departments are encouraged to use independent, third-party, environmental product or service certification standards when writing specifications for, or procuring, materials, products or services.
4. County departments shall make every reasonable effort to procure chemicals and products that have low toxicity or are non-toxic. Products with the following attributes should be favored:
  - a) Have the fewest adverse health effects such as skin, eye, nose, throat, and lung irritation from toxic compounds.
  - b) Contain the fewest chemicals that can enter the food chain to be consumed by aquatic plants and animals.
  - c) Contain the fewest volatile organic compounds (VOC's) that can escape during product use.
  - d) Avoid unnecessary additives such as fragrances and dyes.
  - e) Reduce product packaging and use recovered/recoverable materials when packaging is necessary.

**B. Energy Efficient Products:**

1. All products purchased or leased by Durham County and for which the U.S. EPA Energy Star certification is available shall meet Energy Star certification, and shall be configured to maximize energy saving features. See [www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov). When Energy Star products are not available, products shall meet or exceed the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) recommended levels.

See [www.eere.energy.gov/femp/technologies/eep\\_purchasingspecs.html](http://www.eere.energy.gov/femp/technologies/eep_purchasingspecs.html).

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2. New and replacement equipment for lighting, heating, ventilation, refrigeration and air conditioning systems, water consuming fixtures and process equipment and all such components shall meet or exceed FEMP recommended levels, whenever practicable.
3. Preference shall be given to systems that run on renewable energy. Where renewable forms of energy are unavailable or not practicable, natural gas shall be used in lieu of electricity, whenever possible.

### C. Water Efficient Products:

County departments that purchase or lease equipment, appliances or systems that use water shall purchase water efficient items, to the greatest extent possible. Whenever possible, items should be purchased that meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Water Sense criteria [www.epa.gov/watersense](http://www.epa.gov/watersense).

### D. Vehicles:

Whenever possible, County departments shall evaluate the purchase of alternative fuel vehicles. Even when not purchasing alternative fuel vehicles, departments shall purchase "greener" vehicles by specifying good fuel economy and environmental performance. Departments shall, whenever possible, purchase or lease those that meet the Environmental Protection Agency's SmartWay designation. See [www.epa.gov/greenvehicles](http://www.epa.gov/greenvehicles).

### E. Buildings:

1. Green purchasing concepts shall be integrated into architectural designs, final construction documents and into final construction of buildings and renovations of property owned by Durham County to meet requirements in the Durham County High Performance Building Policy.
2. When maintaining buildings, County departments shall use products with the lowest amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), highest recycled content, and low or no formaldehyde and other toxic substances whenever practicable when purchasing materials such as paint, carpeting, adhesives, and furnishings.

## 6.0 INCORPORATING ENVIRONMENTAL ATTRIBUTES:

Implementation of this Policy depends on the actions of all County departments making every reasonable effort to reduce the amount and toxicity of waste they generate. While working within the legal framework established by the North Carolina general statutes, the Purchasing Division shall be responsible for assisting County departments and contractors with applicable sections of

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this Policy for products and services provided to Durham County.

Some of the methods for encouraging the use of environmentally responsible products and services under this Policy include the following:

1. Bid Process – Where appropriate, the bidding process shall provide an opportunity to specify the desired environmental attributes in products and services to be purchased. Request for Proposals (RFPs) may indicate that an environmentally responsible product or service may be considered as part of providing best value. When evaluating responses to RFPs, additional points may be given to bidders who use environmentally responsible products and services or who engage in environmentally preferable practices as part of conducting their business.
2. Specifications- Where appropriate, specifications in bid request documents shall incorporate environmental preferable attributes. However, specifications must not be used to limit competition by specifying a specific vendor's product. If the requesting department seeks to purchase products or services that do not meet the environmental preferred criteria in this Policy, the department shall provide a written justification for why compliance is not practicable, e.g. the product or service is not technically practical, economically feasible, or available within the timeframe required.
3. Life-cycle Cost- Department Heads are advised that the purchase of some environmentally responsible products may exceed the costs of comparable products. This factor alone shall not determine whether an environmentally responsible product should be purchased. Life-cycle costing which is the total cost of the product, including operation, maintenance and disposal, may prove to be more economical in the long run.

Generally for non-paper products, if the life-cycle cost of the environmentally responsible product does not exceed the life-cycle cost of the alternative by more than 10%, and the product meets all necessary specifications, departments are required to request that the environmentally responsible product be purchased. Recycled paper should be purchased whenever possible, regardless of incremental cost.

4. Communicating with vendors and contractors – A growing number of vendors already market environmental preferable alternatives. However, clear lines of communication shall be established by:
  - a) sharing Durham County's environmental goals and objectives
  - b) requesting vendors and contractors providing written materials to Durham County to use both sides of the paper and on recycled paper meeting minimum standards of the US EPA Guidelines
  - c) discouraging vendors and contractors from using binders, plastic covers, and other

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items that impede the recycling process

- d) requesting written notification from vendors and contractors when they are no longer able to comply with this Policy
- e) conducting vendor fairs and meetings to provide information

7.0 TRAINING:

1. All new employees shall be made aware of this Policy and the reasoning behind it during New Employee Training.
2. An on-line catalog of Environmentally Preferable Products shall be made available through the Purchasing Division to increase awareness of opportunities to purchase environmentally responsible products.
3. This Policy shall be incorporated into the County’s annual Purchasing Policies and Procedures training course.

8.0 PROGRAM EVALUATION:

The County’s Green Team shall evaluate and report annually to the County Manager the success in meeting the goals and objectives of this Policy. The report shall include, whenever possible, any barriers encountered, recommendations for resolution and/or description of assistance needed to continuously improve staff’s ability to meet this Policy’s objectives for procurement of environmentally preferable products and services.

County departments and offices shall assign staff to assist the Green Team in:

- a. evaluating environmentally preferable products and services to determine the extent to which they may be used by the County and its contractors
- b. reviewing and maximizing the use of specifications for environmentally preferable products and services where practicable
- c. facilitating data collection on purchases of environmentally preferable products and services for inclusion in the annual report.