ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES SPECIFICATION

The District of Columbia is committed to procuring quality goods and services in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost that support the District in meeting its sustainability goals. Compliance with specification guidance is sufficient to meet PPRA Section 1101(a) environmentally preferable procurement requirements. This additional information provides context, as well as supplemental recommendations that, although recommended, are not required for compliance with PPRA 1101(a). To access solicitation documents with full contract language, click here.

Scope

This specification addresses the office supplies listed in the table below such as binders, folders, envelopes, notepads, writing instruments and breakroom supplies.

Supplementary Recommendations

To further improve the environmental performance of office supplies purchased by the District of Columbia beyond the minimum requirements of the environmental specification guidance, purchasers should consider adopting the supplementary recommendations for recovered materials content defined below.

BENEFITS

24 MILLION

BTUs of energy saved each year if the District purchases 5,000 plastic/cardboard binders with 30% PCRC

This would avoid the generation of **2.4 metric tons** of greenhouse gas emissions

SOURCES

https://19january2017snapshot.epa.gov/www3/epawaste/conserve/tools/warm/ReCon_Online.html

APRIL 2023

Background Information

Office supply products reflect a large and diverse group of items; therefore, this specification focuses on office supply products for which sustainable alternatives are widely available. This specification closely follows the U.S. EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines, which serve as the model for recycled content specifications in many other jurisdictions around the country. This specification also incorporates requirements from the Northeast Recycling Council's (NERC's) Model Specifications and Purchasing Guidelines for Environmentally Preferable Purchasing of Office Supplies.

Postconsumer recycled content (PCRC) reflects the proportion of a product made from consumer materials that otherwise would have been disposed. Pre-consumer recycled content refers to the percent of a product made from manufacturing waste, while **Total Recycled Content (TRC)** refers to the sum of the postconsumer and pre consumer recycled content. Consistent with EPA's Guidelines and NERC's Model Specifications, this specification requires purchasing office supplies with varying levels of recycled content. The recycled-content products in the specification are widely available in the marketplace at costs comparable to non-recycled products. Note that the recycled content logo is not required. For more information, see EPA's product category definitions at epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/tools/cpg/products/define.htm.

Approved Product (AP) Nontoxic indicates that the Art and Creative Materials Institute (ACMI) has certified that a product is nontoxic and conforms to the requirements of ASTM D-4236, Standard Practice for Labeling Art Materials for Chronic Health Hazards. ACMI's toxicologists test and certify products for both acute and chronic hazards.

Expanded polystyrene, sometimes referred to as **Styrofoam** or **foam,** is a material that cannot be composted or readily recycled and contributes to pollution of the Anacostia River. The Sustainable DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2014 bans its use effective January 1, 2016.

FSC certification signifies that the Forest Stewardship Council, an independent, third-party standard setting organization, has certified that a wood or paper product meets or exceeds FSC's criteria for sustainable forestry and supply chain management. FSC certification requires that forest managers meet FSC's principles and criteria, including promoting biodiversity, protecting indigenous peoples' rights, and eliminating toxic chemical use. In addition, certification requires that each company in the supply chain retain and document FSC-certified content during the processing, manufacturing, and distribution process. FSC certification is highly regarded; it continues to be the only forestry certification recognized by LEED.

This specification prohibits the purchasing of plastic products that have **antimicrobial** (or antibacterial) **coatings**. Antimicrobials typically are marketed as an added benefit of a product. If inclusion of antimicrobial or antimicrobial ingredients is not listed in the product description, than it is unlikely the product contains them. Antimicrobials may contribute to the development of antibiotic as these chemicals may contribute to the development of antibiotic resistant germs, and can be toxic to humans and the environment. Triclosan, a bactericide and preservative commonly found in antimicrobial products, has been linked to hormonal and other toxic effects in animals. In December 2013, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposed a rule that would govern the use of triclosan in consumer products. More information is available at: www.ewg.org/research/ewgs-guide-triclosan.

In some cases, this specification prohibits the purchase of products made with **PVC** or **vinyl (**polyvinyl chloride). PVC is made from vinyl chloride and a variety of additives, often including a class of chemicals called phthalates. Many types of phthalates used to manufacture PVC are included on California's Proposition 65 List for carcinogenicity and reproductive toxicity. The additives can be released when flexible PVC is bent through off-gassing. Vinyl chloride, the base material used to make PVC, is classified as a human carcinogen by the U.S. EPA. Plants that manufacture PVC may emit vinyl chloride during manufacture, exposing workers and the local community to a carcinogenic compound. More information about PVC is available at: http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/text_version/chemicals.php?id=84

Environmental Hotspots

The most important environmental benefits associated with this specification

ENERGY CONSUMPTION	Transport, processing, and manufacture of recycled products require less total energy than producing and transporting virgin products. For example, 20% PCRC plastic uses approximately 17% less total energy than virgin plastic production. This results in a decrease in greenhouse gas emissions of approximately 18%.
WATER CONSUMPTION	Production using recycled materials typically requires less water throughout the product life cycle than producing and transporting virgin products. For example, recycled paper production requires approximately 15% less water than virgin paper production.
RECYCLED CONTENT	This specification requires a range of recycled content for different paper and plastic products, which reduces the demand for raw materials.
TOXICITY/HEAVY METALS	This specification requires that markers and highlighters be certified as AP nontoxic and prohibits the purchase of many items that contain PVC, a material has the potential to release substances that contribute to hormone disruption. Both requirements eliminate potential exposure to toxic chemicals.
END-OF-LIFE DISPOSAL	Recycling office supplies means that fewer products are disposed in landfills and incinerators.

Significance to the District

PPRA	PPRA § 104 specifies that products meet Default Environmental Standards. U.S. EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines which recommend post-consumer recycled content (PCRC) levels for paper and many types of office supplies, is a Default Environmental Standard (DES).
LEGISLATION	Sustainable DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2014 prohibits use of expanded polystyrene.
LEED FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS: O&M	This specification is in line with the requirements of LEED v4 EBOM. LEED's Materials and Resources: "Purchasing – ongoing" credit requires at least 60% of total purchases of ongoing consumables (by cost) meet at least one specified criterion. The criteria include, but are not limited to, a minimum of the PCRC listed in the U.S. EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines, and for products not covered by EPA's Guidelines, any level of recycled content. The vast majority of the requirements in this specification meet EPA's Guidelines. To gain one point for this LEED EBOM credit, electric-powered equipment must also meet a separate list of criteria.

For more information about sustainable specification guidance or the District's Sustainable Purchasing Program, please visit: https://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing-program or call the OCP Procurement Center of Excellence at: 202.724.4477 or email sppdc@dc.gov.