



ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR PRINTING SERVICES

The District of Columbia is committed to procuring quality goods and services in a timely manner and 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. To access solicitation documents with full contract language, click [here](#).



BENEFITS

311

Pounds of greenhouse gases avoided each year if the District purchases 100,000 sheets of 30% PCRC paper instead of non-recycled paper

FSC-certified forests have **significantly lower rates of deforestation** than non-certified forests

Soy-based inks release about **20%** fewer VOCs than petroleum-based inks

SOURCES

c.environmentalpaper.org

rainforest-alliance.org/forestry/documents/peten_study.pdf

greenpressinitiative.org/documents/EPAInkStudy.pdf

Scope

This specification addresses the following service categories:

1. Traditional printing services (business cards, brochures, pocket folders, mailers, flyers)
2. Signage printing services (banners, trade show displays, large posters)
3. Specialty printing services (labels, stickers, decals, promotional products, paychecks/forms requiring security clearance)

Specification Language

Traditional, signage, and specialty printing services purchased by the District of Columbia shall meet the environmental criteria defined below.

Vegetable-Based Ink

Contractors shall use ink meeting the requirements of the Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1994, containing at least the following percentages of vegetable oil:

1. News ink, 40%
2. Sheet-fed ink, 20%
3. Forms ink, 20%
4. Heat-set ink, 10%

Equipment



Contractors' printing facilities shall use ENERGY STAR-certified printing equipment for all types of equipment where ENERGY STAR-certified products are available. Additionally, contractors shall use ENERGY STAR settings as the default for all ENERGY STAR equipment.

Printing on Paper and Paper-Based Products

(Note that the following requirement applies only to paper and paper-based materials. It is not applicable to specialty printing and signage printing on non-paper based materials.)

1. For printing on uncoated paper, contractors shall use paper that contains at least 30% postconsumer recycled content (PCRC) and that is certified by the FSC.
2. For printing on materials other than uncoated paper, contractors shall use materials that meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines for PCRC, as listed below.



Specification Language (continued)

Product	Recycled Content
Reprographic Paper, Offset Paper, Forms Bond, Wove Envelope Paper, Cotton Fiber Paper, Text & Cover Paper, File Folders	30% PCRC
Kraft Envelope Paper, Supercalendered, Machine Finish Groundwood, Papeteries, Check Safety Paper, Coated Printing Paper	10% PCRC
Bristols: Cards (Index, Postal, and Other, Including Index Sheets), Tags & Tickets	20% PCRC

Reporting

Annually or as requested, the contractor shall submit to the Contracting Officer an Environmentally Preferable Products and Services (EPPS) Report, indicating that the products supplied to the District comply with the District's EPPS criteria. The following information shall be included in the report:

- a. Contractor name
- b. Contract award date
- c. Contract #
- d. PO#
- e. Product description - description of printing service
- f. Number of units sold
- g. Price per unit
- h. Total cost
- i. Compliance with DC environmental criteria – Indicate if service provided is compliant with DC environmental requirements. If the environmental requirement was not specified in the solicitation, indicate NA.

An EPPS Report template is available to assist Contractors in meeting the District's EPPS reporting requirements on the [Sustainable Purchasing Program web page](#).



Background Information



Postconsumer recycled content

(PCRC) reflects the proportion of a product recycled from consumer materials that otherwise would have been disposed. For paper, PCRC is measured based on weight, sometimes referred to as postconsumer waste (PCW). Along with many jurisdictions throughout the country, the U.S. EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines recommend purchasing uncoated office paper with at least 30% PCRC for uncoated paper and at least 10% PCRC for coated paper. Paper meeting these requirements has been proven to perform well and is widely available in the marketplace at costs comparable to non-recycled paper. When buying recycled content paper, purchasers should ensure that the paper is rated for its intended use. Paper rated as multi-purpose meets the needs for copiers, laser printers, and ink jet printers. Other forms of recycled content not included in the specification include pre-consumer recycled content and total recycled content. Pre-consumer recycled content refers to the percent of a product made from manufacturing waste, while total recycled content refers to the sum of the postconsumer and pre-consumer recycled content. Note that the recycled content logo is not required. For more information, see EPA's product category definitions at epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/tools/cpgg/products/define.htm.



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, such as printing facilities. FSC certification is highly regarded; it continues to be the only forestry certification recognized by LEED. FSC-certified paper is widely available in the marketplace at costs similar to paper without the certification.

Vegetable-based inks use vegetable oil in place of petroleum. These inks are less toxic than petroleum-based inks, releasing fewer volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the environment. Additionally, vegetable-based inks use renewable resources in place of non-renewable petroleum. The Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1994 sets requirements for the Federal government for the minimum allowable vegetable-based content in printing inks, which are noted above for this specification.



ENERGY STAR certification indicates that the product meets specific energy use criteria established by the ENERGY STAR program. ENERGY STAR is a voluntary program run by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy. Among other efforts, ENERGY STAR certifies products that demonstrate that they meet defined energy use criteria through third-party testing in EPA-recognized laboratories. Certified products are allowed to use the ENERGY STAR label. ENERGY STAR products are widely available, accounting for a majority of all printing equipment available for purchase in the U.S. ENERGY STAR electronics have substantial environmental benefits; for example, ENERGY STAR printers use 20-50% less energy than conventional models. Access the ENERGY STAR calculator at: www.energystar.gov/buildings/sites/default/uploads/files/Office_Equipment_Calculator.xls?af5e-7396.



Environmental Hotspots The most important environmental benefits associated with this specification

ENERGY CONSUMPTION	ENERGY STAR sets performance standards for energy efficiency. ENERGY STAR imaging equipment generally uses 40 to 55 percent less energy than non-ENERGY STAR models. Transport, processing, and manufacture of recycled paper use approximately 10% less total energy than virgin paper production. This results in an approximate 10% decrease in greenhouse gas emissions.
WATER CONSUMPTION	Recycled paper production requires approximately 15% less water throughout its life cycle than virgin paper production.
MATERIALS USE/ SUSTAINABLE SOURCING	The FSC certification signifies that the product originates from sustainably-managed forests and retains its certified content throughout the supply chain. Vegetable-based inks use renewable materials in place of non-renewable petroleum.
RECYCLED CONTENT	This specification requires 30% PCRC for uncoated paper and 10-30% PCRC for other types of paper, which reduces the demand for virgin wood proportionately.
POLLUTANTS/TOXICITY/ HEAVY METALS	Vegetable-based inks release fewer VOCs than petroleum-based inks. VOCs reduce indoor air quality and can cause a range of adverse health effects from respiratory irritation to cancer.
END-OF-LIFE DISPOSAL	Using recycled content reduces disposal of paper in landfills and incinerators.

Significance to the District

LEGISLATION	This specification supports compliance with the <u>Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1994</u> which sets requirements for the Federal government for the minimum allowable vegetable-based content in printing inks.
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For more information about sustainable specification guidance or the District's Sustainable Purchasing Program, please visit: <http://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing>, call the OCP Customer Contact Center at: [202.724.4477](tel:202.724.4477), or email sppdc@dc.gov.