



# ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR OFFICE SUPPLIES

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

**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

SOURCE

[epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/tools/warm/ReCon\\_Online.html](http://epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/tools/warm/ReCon_Online.html)

## Scope

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

## Specification Language

Office supplies purchased by the District of Columbia shall meet the environmental criteria and reporting requirements defined below.

Product	Environmental Criteria
Address, shipping, file folder sheet-style labels: white	30% Postconsumer Recycled Content (PCRC); no antimicrobial coatings
Batteries	Rechargeable
Binders: 3-ring, chipboard or cardboard	75% PCRC; no antimicrobial coatings
Binders: 3-ring, pressboard	30% PCRC; no antimicrobial coatings
Binders: 3-ring, plastic with chipboard or cardboard interior	30% PCRC; no PVC; no antimicrobial coatings
Binders: 3-ring, solid plastic	No PVC; no antimicrobial coatings
Clip portfolios: plastic	90% PCRC; no antimicrobial coatings
Clipboards: hardboard	100% Recycled Content (RC); no antimicrobial coatings
Clipboards: metal	30% PCRC; no antimicrobial coatings
Clipboards: plastic	30% PCRC; no antimicrobial coatings
Calendars: coated paper, desk and hanging	10% PCRC
Calendars: non-coated paper, desk and hanging	30% PCRC



## Specification Language (continued)

Product	Environmental Criteria
Construction paper	<u>See the paper specification</u>
Correction tape	No antimicrobial coatings
Corrugated containers	25% PCRC
Crayons	AP nontoxic (ASTM D 4236)
Desk trays	25% PCRC; no antimicrobial coatings
Easel pads	30% PCRC
Envelopes: wove	30% PCRC
Envelopes (catalog): kraft, white, and colored (including manila); paper	20% PCRC
Envelopes: kraft, unbleached paper	10% PCRC
Facial tissue	10% PCRC; 100% RC
File folders and pocket folders: paper	10% PCRC
Markers and highlighters (permanent markers, dry erase markers)	AP nontoxic (ASTM D 4236); no antimicrobial coatings
Napkins	30% PCRC; 100% RC
Notebooks and notepads	30% PCRC
Office paper	<u>See the paper specification</u>
Padded mailers: paper	5% PCRC
Paper clips	50% PCRC; no PVC or plastic coatings; no antimicrobial coatings
Pens and mechanical pencils	Refillable; no antimicrobial coatings
Post-it notes	30% PCRC
Report covers (pressboard)	20% PCRC
Toner/ink cartridges	<u>See the toner cartridges specification</u>
Waste baskets	20% PCRC; no antimicrobial coatings
Wood pencils	Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood; no antimicrobial coatings

**PRODUCT SPECIFICATIONS CONTINUED —>**



## Specification Language (continued)

Product	Environmental Criteria
<b>BREAKROOM SUPPLIES</b>	
Cleaning supplies: dish soap, all-purpose cleaner, etc.	<u>See the cleaning supplies specification</u>
Cups	No expanded polystyrene (e.g. Styrofoam)
Paper towels	<u>See the cleaning supplies specification</u>
Plates	No expanded polystyrene (e.g. Styrofoam)
Trash bags	<u>See the cleaning supplies specification</u>

## Reporting

At the frequency specified in the solicitation, the Contractor shall submit to the Contracting Officer an 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 - manufacturer description of product
- f. Sku
- g. Corresponding environmentally preferable (EPPS) product type based on the product types listed in the above table (ex . Notebooks and notepads)
- h. Environmental (EPPS) criteria (optional)
- i. Number of units sold
- j. Price per unit
- k. Total cost
- l. Compliance with DC environmental criteria – Indicate whether each item purchased 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

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](http://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](http://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](http://toxtown.nlm.nih.gov/text_version/chemicals.php?id=84)



**Environmental Hotspots** The most important environmental benefits associated with this specification

<b>ENERGY CONSUMPTION</b>	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%.
<b>WATER CONSUMPTION</b>	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.
<b>RECYCLED CONTENT</b>	This specification requires a range of recycled content for different paper and plastic products, which reduces the demand for raw materials.
<b>TOXICITY/HEAVY METALS</b>	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.
<b>END-OF-LIFE DISPOSAL</b>	Recycling office supplies means that fewer products are disposed in landfills and incinerators.

**Significance to the District**

<b>PPRA</b>	<u>PPRA § 104</u> 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).
<b>LEGISLATION</b>	<u>Sustainable DC Omnibus Amendment Act of 2014</u> prohibits use of expanded polystyrene.
<b>LEED FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS: O&amp;M</b>	This specification is in line with the requirements of LEED v4 EBOM. <u>LEED's Materials and Resources: "Purchasing – ongoing" credit</u> 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: <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](mailto:sppdc@dc.gov).