



GREEN PURCHASING POLICY

UPDATED MAY 1, 2008

George Mason University is committed to the stewardship of the environment and to reducing the University's dependence on non-renewable energy. These Green Purchasing Policies and Procedures support the University's commitment to sustainability.

The goal of this policy is to reduce the adverse environmental impact of our purchasing decisions by buying goods and services from manufacturers and vendors who share our commitment to the environment. Green purchasing is the method wherein environmental and social considerations are taken with equal weight to the price, availability and performance criteria that colleges and universities use to make purchasing decisions.

Green Purchasing is also known as "environmentally preferred purchasing (EPP), green procurement, affirmative procurement, eco-procurement, and environmentally responsible purchasing," particularly within the U.S. Federal government agencies

Green Purchasing minimizes negative environmental and social effects through the use of environmentally friendly products.

Green Purchasing attempts to identify and reduce environmental impact and to maximize resource efficiency.

ENERGY

Policy: All desktop computers, notebooks and monitors purchased must meet at a minimum, environmental criteria designated as "required" as contained in the IEEE 1680 Standard for the Environmental Assessment of Personal Computer Products.

Impact: None. Apple, Dell, Gateway, HP and Lenova are manufactured to this standard

Policy: Copiers and printers purchased shall be compatible with the use of recycled content and remanufactured products.

Impact: None. Canon, our partner, produces compliant equipment. HP printers, which have been the standard before our Canon contract are also product compliant.

Policy: Remanufactured toner cartridges should be used in all copiers and printers whenever feasible.

Impact: Substantial. A comprehensive RFP which includes product testing must be developed in order to maintain the integrity of the equipment.

Policy: All electrical products purchased by George Mason University shall meet the U.S. EPA Energy Star* certification when available and practicable. When Energy Star labels are not available, energy products that are in the upper 25% of energy efficiency, as designated by the Federal Energy Management Program, shall be used.

Impact: Will focus future purchases on Energy Star rated products.

Policy: Suppliers of electronic equipment, including but not limited to computers, monitors, printers and copiers shall be required to take back equipment for reuse or environmentally safe recycling when possible and requested by George Mason University.

Impact: None. The requirement can be established in the solicitation leading to the contract. Further, most usable or repairable products are sold for reuse through Surplus Property.

Policy: When acquiring vehicles, the University shall purchase less-polluting alternatives to gasoline or diesel fuel such as compressed natural gas, bio-based fuels, hybrids, electric batteries and fuel cells, as available and suitable for the use intended.

Impact: Minimal. We have required the purchase of alternative fueled vehicles for several years. Some departments have been slow to embrace this policy, but acceptance has been improving in the last year.

Policy: When practicable, the University shall replace inefficient interior lighting with energy efficient equipment.

Impact: None for lighting replacement done as part of a larger renovation project. Significant if replacement of lighting is done as a standalone project outside of our Energy Performance Contract.

Policy: The University shall replace inefficient exterior lighting with energy-efficient equipment, when practicable.

Impact: None. This has been an ongoing project for a number of years.

2. WATER

Policy: The University shall purchase only water efficient appliances when available. This includes, but is not limited to, high performance fixtures such as toilets, low-flow faucets, aerators; and includes upgraded irrigation systems.

Impact: Minimal if fixture replacement is done as part of a larger renovation project. Significant only when replacement of water fixtures is done as a standalone project.

3. TOXINS AND POLLUTIONS

Policy: Cleaning solvents shall be biodegradable, phosphate free and citrus based where their use will not compromise quality of service.

Impact: Minimal. Custodial department is already working with purchasing to identify "Green certified" products for their use.

Policy: Industrial and institutional cleaning products that meet Green Seal certification standards or environmental preferability and performance shall be purchased and/or be required to be supplied by janitorial contractors.

Impact: Minimal. Custodial department is already changing to these types of products. The requirement can be established through the solicitation process.

Policy: All surfactants and detergents used shall be readily biodegradable and shall not contain phosphates.

Impact: Minimal. Custodial department is already working with purchasing to identify "Green certified" products for their use.

Policy: Vacuum cleaners that meet the requirements of the Carpet and Rug Institute "Green Label" Testing Program – Vacuum Cleaner Criteria, are capable of capturing 96% of particulates 0.3 microns in size, and operate with a sound level less than 70dBA shall be used by in-house staff and required for janitorial contractors.

Impact: Minimal. Vacuum cleaners that meet the "Green Label" requirements have been purchased over the last couple of years and will continue to be purchased when new equipment is needed. None for new janitorial contracts, but would have to wait until contracts expire and new requirements are identified in RFP.

Policy: Whenever possible, products and equipment shall not contain lead or mercury. For products that contain lead or mercury, preference should be given to those products with lower quantities of these metals and to vendors with established lead and mercury recovery programs.

Impact: Minimal. This requirement will be established in solicitations.

Policy: When maintaining buildings and landscapes, the University shall manage pest problems through prevention and physical, mechanical and the use of environmentally friendly products. They may either adopt and implement an organic pest management policy and practices or adopt and implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy and practices using the least toxic pest control as a last resort.

Impact: Minimal. Facilities, Ground Maintenance and Purchasing are already investigating and Integrated Pest Management program.

4. BIO-BASED PRODUCTS

Policy: Bio-based plastic products that are biodegradable and compostable, such as bags, film, food and beverage containers, and cutlery, shall be acquired by the University and /or used by our contractors whenever practicable.

Impact: Minimal. This is an encouraged voluntary use and not a requirement.

Policy: Compostable plastic products purchased shall meet the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) standards as found in ASTM D6400-04. Biodegradable plastics used as coatings on paper and other compostable substrates shall meet ASTM D6868-03 standards

Impact: Minimal. This requirement will be established in solicitations.

Policy: Vehicle fuels made from non-wood, plant-based contents such as vegetable oils are encouraged whenever practicable.

Impact: Minimal. This is an encouraged voluntary use and is not a requirement.

Policy: Paper, paper products and construction products made from non-wood, plant based contents such as agricultural crops and residues are encouraged whenever practicable.

Impact: Substantial. The architects and construction contractor's standards book published by University Services will have to be revised to include this requirement. Costs may be prohibitive.

5. FOREST CONSERVATION

Policy: All wood and wood contained within the products that the University purchases shall be certified to be sustainably harvested by a comprehensive, performance based certification system. The certification system shall include independent third-party audits, with standards equivalent to, or stricter than, those of the Forest Stewardship Council certification.

Impact: Substantial. Current contract suppliers may not meet this requirement.

Policy: Purchase or use of previously used or salvaged wood and wood products are encouraged whenever practicable.

Impact: Minimal. This requirement will be established in solicitations.

6. RECYCLING AND RECYCLED MATERIALS

Policy: 30% post-consumer waste recycled paper shall be the standard for all applications where quality of service or the health and safety of employees is not compromised

Impact: Minimal. The recycled paper is now equal to virgin paper. The only draw-back is that it is 5% - 15% (depending on the overall volume ordered) more costly than virgin paper.

Policy: All materials that can be recycled are to be recycled through the University recycling program. This includes, but is not limited to; paper, newspaper, cardboard, aluminum cans, plastic bottles and steel.

Impact: Minimal. If the program makes it easy for the campus to recycle, there should be little impact. Education is the key.

Policy: When specifying asphalt concrete, aggregate base or Portland cement concrete for road construction projects, recycled, reusable or reground materials shall be used when practicable.

Impact: Substantial. The architects and construction contractor's standards book published by University Services will have to be revised to include this requirement.

Policy: The use of reclaimed stone and brick and the use of secondary or recycled aggregates will be specified whenever practicable.

Impact: Substantial. The architects and construction contractor's standards book published by University Services will have to be revised to include this requirement.

Policy: Transportation products, including signs, cones, parking stops, delineators, channelizers and barricades shall contain the highest post-consumer content practicable.

Impact: Minimal. This requirement will be established in solicitations.

Policy: Products that are durable, long lasting, reusable or refillable are preferred whenever feasible.

Impact: Minimal. This requirement will be established in solicitations.

Policy: All documents (the University and Suppliers) shall be printed and copied on both sides to reduce the use and purchase of paper, whenever practicable.

Impact: Minimal - Substantial. Not all printers can be programmed for double sided copying and ongoing education will be needed. Requirements for suppliers can be written into solicitation and contracts.

7. PACKAGING

Policy: Packaging that is reusable, recyclable or compostable shall be specified when available and suitable for use. Packaging shall be eliminated or minimized to the greatest extent practicable.

Impact: None to Minimal. This can be incorporated into the solicitation.

8. GREEN BUILDING

Policy: Solicitations for new construction, renovation and remodeling shall include Green Building standards and materials as described in the LEED Rating System, where appropriate, with said standards and materials integrated into architectural designs, final construction documents and into the final construction of all George Mason University buildings, renovations of property or facilities owned by George Mason University.

Impact: Minimal. This is already required for new construction and major renovations. It can be extended to minor renovations.

Contractors using waste containers must order them through George Mason University Grounds Maintenance Department. Any time a waste container is ordered, a review will be done at that time to decide if a metal recycling container would also be applicable and, if so, would be provided to the project at no charge as long as the container is not contaminated with refuse.

Impact: Minimal. Space is sometimes an issue.

Policy: Products and materials acquired or used to maintain buildings such as paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture and casework shall have the lowest amount of volatile organic compounds (VOCs), highest recycled content, and low or no formaldehyde.

All carpet distributors and/or manufacturers of carpet installed at George Mason University must have a carpet recycling plan that is approved by Purchasing and Business Services.

Impact: None. This has been required for at least 10 years.

Policy: Specifications for the acquisition of heating/ventilating/air conditioning, refrigeration, insulation and fire suppression systems shall require that these systems not contain chlorofluorocarbon and/or Bromotrifluoromethane [halon]-containing refrigerants or solvents.

Impact: Substantial. Such equipment may have a higher acquisition cost.

9. LANDSCAPING

Policy: All landscape renovations, construction and maintenance performed by internal staff members or contractors providing landscaping services shall employ sustainable landscape management techniques for design, construction and maintenance whenever possible. This includes, but not limited to, integrated pest management, drip irrigation, composting and the use of mulch and compost that give preference to those produced from regionally generated plant debris and/or food waste program.

Impact: Minimal. Grounds department already working on Integrated Pest Management Program and is already employing all other landscape management techniques.

Policy: Landscape structures constructed of recycled content materials shall be specified and acquired when practicable for the intended use. Impervious surfaces in the landscape shall be limited, whenever practicable. Permeable substitutes, such as permeable asphalt or pavers, shall be specified for walkways, patios and driveways.

Impact: Minimal. This requirement will be established through the solicitation process.

Policy: Plants should be selected to minimize waste by choosing species for purchase that are appropriate to the microclimate. Native and drought-tolerant plants that require no or minimal watering once established should be purchased.

Impact: Minimal. The Grounds department is already doing this.

The contents of this policy are specified and are part of George Mason University's plan to lower and/or eliminate the negative effects of greenhouse gases related to purchases, of goods and services, building design, repair, maintenance, and landscaping. Every aspect of this plan is fashioned to comply with the finding from the Fourth Virginia Governor's Commission on Climate Change. Any inquiry regarding use of this document for the purposes of replication should be made to the director of purchasing and accounts payable. 4400 University Drive, Fairfax, Virginia, 22030

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