



Subject/Title

Environmental Purchasing Policy

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City Manager

Business Support Services

Responsible Key Business

1. Introduction.

The City of Charlotte (the “City”) is a very large consumer of goods and services and the purchasing decisions of our employees and vendors can impact the environment. By including environmental considerations in procurement decisions, along with traditional concerns with price, performance and availability, the City will remain fiscally responsible while promoting practices that improve public health and safety, reduce pollution, and conserve natural resources.

2. Purpose.

The purpose of this Environmental Purchasing Policy (the “Policy”) is to establish the framework for a sustainability-based purchasing program for the City of Charlotte. By encouraging and promoting the purchase of environmentally friendly products whose quality, function, and cost are equal or superior to more traditional products, the City 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 the community;
- support strong recycling markets;
- reduce landfill material;
- increase the use and availability of an environmentally preferable product;
- reward a vendor who reduces environmental impacts in the production and distribution systems or services;
- strengthen markets for recycled materials and increase economic development for manufacturers producing source reduction and recyclable products;
- create a model for successfully purchasing environmentally preferable products that encourages other government agencies, residents and businesses in our community to adopt similar goals, which will help generate the demand for environmentally preferable products; and
- educate City employees, vendors, and end users.

3. Intended Use.

The City of Charlotte strives to be a responsible environmental leader. This Environmental Purchasing Policy will complement several policies and plans listed below, that are in place to guide decisions and actions of City employees to reduce environmental impact, and help reach the City’s environmental goals.

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It is not the intent of this policy to require a department or vendor to:

- take any action that conflicts with other City policies, or local, state or federal requirements;
- to procure products that do not perform adequately for their intended use;
- to exclude adequate competition; or
- to pursue products not available at a reasonable price in a reasonable period of time.

4. Resources Available to Key Business Units (KBU).

The following resources may assist Key Business Units in environmental purchasing decision making:

- *Strategic Focus Area Plan for the Environment* – Each year the Charlotte City Council reviews and adopts the annual Focus Area Plan for the Environment. This site provides the City’s focus area initiatives for preserving natural resources while balancing growth with sound fiscal policy.
<http://cnet/citygovt/Environment/Documents/FY09%20Focus%20Area%20Plan.pdf>
- *Purchasing Guide for Environmentally Preferable Products* – A guide that provides the basics of environmentally preferable purchasing, suggested purchasing resources and purchasing recommendations for many product groups to help make environmentally preferable buying decisions. <http://cnet/citygovt/Environment/Documents>
- *Policy for Sustainable City Facilities* – A policy for design, construction and operation of sustainable City facilities which meets the functionality and service needs of the citizens of Charlotte while minimizing environmental impacts and conserving and protecting resources.
[http://cityspaces/charmec/jointuse/Project%20Research%20Documents/City%20Sustainable%20Facilities%20Policy%20\(2009\).pdf#search=%22sustainable%22](http://cityspaces/charmec/jointuse/Project%20Research%20Documents/City%20Sustainable%20Facilities%20Policy%20(2009).pdf#search=%22sustainable%22)
- *Fleet & Motorized Equipment Asset Management Policy* – A policy for providing and maintaining an effective, efficient and environmentally sustainable fleet of vehicles, motorized, and trailed equipment, and manages this fleet and equipment in a manner that fulfills the City’s mission and the user’s functional requirements in a cost effective way. <http://cityspaces/kbus/bss/emd/fleet/pages/default.aspx>
- *City Environment Information Website* - This site is the central location for the City’s focus on the environment with the latest environmental news and educational resources. <http://cnet/citygovt/environment/Pages/home.aspx>

5. Product Conservation and Waste Reduction Goals.

Whenever practicable and cost effective, all City Key Business Units shall institute the following practices that reduce waste, reduce purchases or result in the purchase of products that are durable, reusable or refillable, made with nontoxic, and/or recyclable materials, as long as the products meet or exceed specifications, but without reducing safety, workplace quality or effectiveness:

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- 5.1 When comparing product costs, consider the costs over the life of the product, which includes the initial cost along with maintenance, operating, insurance, disposal, recycle or replacement and potential liability costs. Examining life cycle costs will save money by ensuring we are quantifying the total cost of ownership before making purchasing decisions.
- 5.2 Purchase remanufactured products such as toner cartridges, and automotive parts whenever practicable.
- 5.3 All documents shall be printed and copied on both sides to reduce the use and purchase of paper whenever practicable.
- 5.4 Request vendors to eliminate packaging or use the minimum amount necessary for product protection to the greatest extent practicable, or to use packaging that is reusable, recyclable, or compostable in existing recycling programs. The City shall request vendors to take back and reuse pallets, and other shipping and packaging materials that cannot be eliminated.
- 5.5 Consolidate the use of electronic equipment and minimize the purchase of individual printers for staff members.
- 5.6 Use electronic communication and presentations over paper whenever practicable.
- 5.7 Re-use products such as, but not limited to, file folders, storage boxes, binders, and furnishings.
- 5.8 The City encourages all KBU to provide drinking water in pitchers or reusable containers instead of purchasing individual plastic bottles of water.
- 5.9 The City and its caterers and food vendors shall use reusable or recycled content and biodegradable food ware (plates, cups, utensils) for all City meetings and events. The use of Styrofoam containers for food items provided during City meetings and events is discouraged.

6. Environmentally Preferable Office Supplies.

City employees shall purchase the following environmentally preferred office supplies that are sustainably produced, contain recycled content or are made with less toxic materials:

- Copying and Printing Paper (30% recycled content)
- Inkjet, Toner, and Printer Cartridges (remanufactured)
- Hanging File Folders (recycled content)
- Manila Folders (recycled content)
- Post-It Notes (recycled content)
- Writing Pads, Legal Pads, Steno pads (recycled content)
- Dividers and Indexes (recycled content)

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- Bankers Boxes (recycled content)
- 3-Ring binders (recycled content)

An online shopping list of these approved environmentally preferred items has been posted on the City's current office supply vendor's website to assist with product selection when placing an order. Employees with valid log-ins and passwords can access the list.

6.1 KBU may request a waiver from purchasing specific environmentally preferred products listed above when one or more of the following conditions exist:

- The product does not meet the departmental performance standards;
- The product is not available within a reasonable period of time; or
- The product fails to meet federal, state, or local health or safety standards.

All requests for waivers must be submitted to Business Support Services/ Procurement Services Division (BSS/PSD) and must include the following information:

1. documentation that the department has thoroughly tested the product and the specific negative performance results;
2. the use and intensity of use for the product; and
3. a written memo detailing all attempts to explore and utilize listed alternatives to the selected product.

BSS/PSD will review all requests for waivers and provide an indication of concurrence or non-concurrence, and maintain documentation. Key Business Units that purchase goods not approved by BSS/PSD will be subject to review by the City Manager's Office.

7. Environmentally Preferred Criteria.

The following criteria shall be considered when making environmental purchasing decisions.

7.1 Recyclable and Nontoxic Products.

1. City departments shall purchase and use recycled paper (minimum 30% post-consumer recycled content) for all documents whenever possible. Documents printed on recycled paper shall include the recycling symbol when possible. This applies to all documents and business cards made by an outside vendor. Paper products should be processed chlorine-free, whenever possible.
2. Strong consideration shall be given to durable items having minimal packaging, that can be reused, and/or items that are recyclable when discarded.
3. KBUs are encouraged to use independent, third-party, environmental product or service certification standards provided in the Purchasing Guide for

Environmental Preferable Products when writing specifications for or procuring a material, product or service.

<http://cnet/citygovt/Environment/Documents>

4. KBU shall make every reasonable effort to procure chemicals and products that have low toxicity or are nontoxic whenever practicable. KBU shall require all vendors to provide Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) on all such products. KBU will be responsible for maintaining MSDS information. The following product attributes should be favored:
 - Those products causing the fewest adverse health effects such as skin, eye, nose, throat and lung irritations from toxic compounds;
 - Those products containing the fewest chemicals that can enter the food chain to be consumed by aquatic plants and animals;
 - Those products having the fewest volatile organic compounds (VOC) that can escape during product use;
 - Those products without unnecessary additives, such as fragrances and dyes; and
 - Those products with reduced packaging or packaging that were recovered or that contains recoverable materials.

7.2 Energy Efficient Products.

1. All products purchased or leased to the City of Charlotte for City owned or leased facilities shall meet Energy Star certification and shall be configured to maximize energy savings when practicable.
2. New and replacement equipment for lighting, heating, ventilation, refrigeration and an air conditioning system, water consuming fixtures and process equipment and all such components shall meet or exceed Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) recommended levels, whenever practicable.
3. Preference shall be given to a system that runs on environmentally friendly energy sources. Renewable forms of energy including natural gas shall be used in lieu of electricity, whenever possible.

7.3 Water Efficient Products.

City departments that purchase or lease equipment, appliance or systems that use water shall purchase water efficient items, to the greatest extent possible. Whenever possible, items should be purchased that meet the US Environmental Protection Agency's Water Sense criteria which may be viewed at www.epa.gov/watersense.

7.4 Vehicles and Motorized Equipment.

All vehicles purchased shall comply with the environmental requirements of the Fleet and Motorized Equipment Asset Management Policy (BSS16) approved on August 16, 2010 which may be viewed at <http://cnet/Policies/Pages/default.aspx>.

7.5 Buildings.

The City of Charlotte designs, constructs, and operates facilities in a manner that supports the City's Sustainability Priorities as defined in the Policy for Sustainable City Facilities and located at:

[http://cityspaces/charmeck/jointuse/Project%20Research%20Documents/City%20Sustainable%20Facilities%20Policy%20\(2009\).pdf#search=%22sustainable%22](http://cityspaces/charmeck/jointuse/Project%20Research%20Documents/City%20Sustainable%20Facilities%20Policy%20(2009).pdf#search=%22sustainable%22)

When maintaining facilities, City departments shall use products with the lowest amount of volatile organic compounds (VOC), the highest recycled content and low or no formaldehyde and other toxic substances whenever practicable.

8. Incorporating Environmental Attributes.

Successful implementation of the Environmental Purchasing Policy depends on the actions of all City departments making every reasonable effort to reduce the amount and toxicity of generated waste. While working within the legal framework established by the North Carolina General Statutes, the Procurement Services Division shall be responsible for assisting City departments and vendors with applicable sections of this policy for products and services provided to the City of Charlotte.

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

8.1 Solicitation Process.

Where appropriate, the solicitation process shall provide an opportunity to specify the desired environmental attributes in a product and/or service to be purchased. A Request for Proposals (RFP) may indicate that an environmentally responsible product and/or service may be considered as part of providing best value. When evaluating responses to an RFP, additional consideration may be given to vendors who use an environmentally responsible product and/or service or who engage in an environmentally preferable practice as part of conducting business.

8.2 Specifications.

Where appropriate, specifications in a solicitation document shall incorporate environmental preferable attributes whenever technically and economically feasible. However, specifications and/or requirements must not be used to limit competition by specifying a specific vendor's product or service.

8.3 Lifecycle Cost.

Key Business Executives (KBE) are advised that the purchase of some environmentally responsible products may exceed the cost of a comparable product. This factor alone shall not determine whether an environmentally responsible product should be purchased. Lifecycle 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 lifecycle cost of the environmentally responsible product does not exceed the lifecycle cost of the alternative and the product meets all necessary specifications, a department is required to request that the environmentally responsible product be purchased. Recycled paper shall be purchased whenever possible, regardless of incremental cost.

8.4 Communicating with Vendors.

A growing number of vendors already market environmentally preferable alternatives. However, clear lines of communication shall be established by:

1. sharing the City of Charlotte environmental goals and objectives;
2. requesting a vendor, that submits a written document to the City of Charlotte, to use both sides of the paper and use recycled paper meeting minimum standard of the US EPA Guidelines;
3. discouraging the use of binders, plastic covers or other items that impede the recycling process;
4. requesting written notification from a vendor when there is noncompliance with this Policy; and
5. conducting vendor fairs and meetings to provide information.

9. Training.

All new employees shall be made aware of this Policy during new employee orientation and KBU specific training. This Policy shall be incorporated into the Procurement Services Division's Purchasing Policies and Procedures training course.

10. Asset Recovery and Disposal.

This Policy encourages the use of the Asset Recovery and Disposal (ARD) Division of Procurement Services for reusing surplus and used office equipment, such as desks and chairs. Surplus and used office equipment and miscellaneous items are available for reallocation to City departments, which can provide significant department cost savings. Surplus and used office equipment and miscellaneous items that do not get reallocated within the City are disposed of at public auctions. Asset Recovery and Disposal services are provided for the City of Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department, the Charlotte Housing Authority, and County Emergency Management Services.

11. Recyclable Electronic Equipment and Devices.

When a department has electronic equipment and devices for disposal, the department shall arrange disposition with the Asset Recovery and Disposal (ARD) Division of Procurement Services. The ARD is responsible for proper disposal of all electronic products. Electronic equipment and devices that are still operationally functioning, outdated, or non-functioning that a department may send to ARD for final disposition include the following:

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Computer	Printer	Cable	Components	Handheld	Equipment	Misc
Desk	Ink cartridge	Power	Hard drive	Cell phone	Networking	Software
Laptop	Toner cartridge	AC adapter	Optical drive	iPod	Video	Book
Keyboard	Internal ribbon		Floppy drive	Palm	Camera	Manual
Mouse	Cable				Scanner	
Speakers					Fax	
Monitor					Photocopier	
Printer					Typewriter	
Cable					UPS backup	
					Modem	
					Router	

12. Key Business Unit Responsibilities.

Key Business Executives (KBE) and their designees are responsible for the implementation of this Policy and shall:

1. ensure that their respective employees, contractors, and vendors are fully aware and supportive of the City's Environmental Purchasing Policy;
2. exercise due diligence in their procurement decisions, and promote the purchase of environmentally preferable products to the extent practicable and cost effective; and
3. Develop specifications used in public bidding that eliminates barriers to recycled content products whenever practicable.

13. Business Support Services/Procurement Services Division (BSS/PSD) Responsibilities.

1. BSS/PSD will focus on the growth of this program by continuing to collaborate with existing vendors to identify additional environmentally friendly products and services that meet the functional and practicality needs of the City.
2. BSS/PSD will provide KBU with information obtained regarding environmentally preferable products and services.

14. Program Evaluation.

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

Key Business Units shall assist the Procurement Services Division as needed with:

1. Evaluating an environmentally preferable product and service to determine the extent to which the product or service may be used by the City;
2. Reviewing and maximizing the use of specifications for an environmentally preferable product and service where practicable; and
3. Facilitating data collection on the purchase of any environmentally preferable product and service for inclusion in the annual report.

15. Definitions.

15.1 Energy-efficient Product – Product that meets the US Environmental Protection Agency's Energy Star qualifications or US Department of Energy's Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP), including a vehicle that meets the US Environmental Protection Agency's qualifications.

15.2 Environmentally Preferable – Products and services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared to other products and services that serve the same purpose. Products and services should reduce environmental impact through composition and/or recyclability, or by reduction in quantity and toxicity of product waste, energy use or water consumption.

15.3 Fiscally Responsible – The cost factor or purchase price for a recycled product or for a more environmentally responsible item should be consistent with the acquisition cost for a similar or less environmentally responsible item to be determined by the KBE or designee on a case by case basis. Additional costs should be counterbalanced by savings from improved usage procedures.

15.4 Lifecycle Cost – The total cost of a product including procurement, use maintenance and disposal.

15.5 Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) - A form with data regarding the properties of a particular substance. An important component of [product stewardship](#) and [workplace safety](#), it is intended to provide workers and emergency personnel with procedures for handling or working with that substance in a safe manner, and includes information such as physical data ([melting point](#), [boiling point](#), [flash point](#), etc.), [toxicity](#), [health effects](#), [first aid](#), [reactivity](#), storage, disposal, protective equipment, and spill-handling procedures.

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- 15.6 Nontoxic Product** – Any item which is not considered hazardous waste and does not otherwise pose a threat to short or long term human health and the environment during use.
- 15.7 Post-consumer Materials** – A finished material that would normally be disposed of as a solid waste, which has completed its life cycle as a consumer item, and does not include manufacturing or converting wastes.
- 15.8 Practicable** – Means sufficient in performance and not unreasonably priced.
- 15.9 Recycled Product** – Product made with an identifiable percentage (1% - 100%) of post-consumer material content or discarded virgin material salvaged from the industrial waste stream. High-content recycled product contains a minimum of 50% post-consumer material.
- 15.10 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 discard.