

Green Purchasing Policy

I. Preamble:

George Brown College is committed to reducing the environmental impacts of its operations and moving towards environmentally sustainable campus practices. As such, it recognizes that there are environmental impacts associated with the College's purchasing decisions, including "upstream" impacts related to the extraction of natural resources, manufacturing, transportation and packaging, and "downstream" in the final disposal, recycling or re-use of products.

II. Application:

Provided that the pricing, quality and other criteria are the same, preference will be given to products / services that are proven to be environmentally preferable.

When making purchasing decisions, a life-cycle cost analysis should also take into account factors such as operating and energy costs, maintenance, consumable supplies, disposal and recycling costs, when selecting products.

III. Green Purchasing Definition

Green Purchasing is the purchase of goods and services that are environmentally preferable. It includes the purchase of products that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products that serve the same purpose.

When determining whether a product is environmentally preferable all phases of a product's life cycle will be considered, including raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, operation, maintenance, disposal, potential for reuse and ability to be recycled.

IV. Environmental Attributes:

The following environmental attributes are considered preferable:

- Biodegradable/Compostable: The ability of a substance to decompose in the natural environment.
- Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC)-free: CFC's are compounds that contain carbon, chlorine, fluorine and have been used as refrigerants, cleaning solvents, aerosol propellants and in the manufacture of plastic foams.
- Durable: As opposed to single use or disposable, a product that remains useful and usable for a long time without noticeable deterioration in performance.
- Energy efficient: A product that is in the upper 25 percent of energy efficiency for all similar products. (See also Section V. Product Specific Green Recommendations regarding Energy Star appliances and equipment.)

Heavy metal and persistent, bio-accumulative toxin (PBT)-free free: No lead, mercury, or cadmium content; no mercury, dioxins or PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls).

- Locally or regionally manufactured in order to reduce the environmental costs associated with shipping.
- Low volatile organic compound (VOC) content: VOC's are chemicals found in paints, adhesives, glues, textiles and furnishing materials that that readily evaporate and contribute to the formation of air pollution when released into the atmosphere. Many VOCs are classified as toxic and carcinogenic. (See also Section V. Product Specific Green Recommendations regarding Furniture.)
- Made from recycled materials with a maximum of post-consumer content (by-products recovered or diverted from the solid waste stream).
- Made from raw materials obtained in a sustainable, environmental sound manner.
- Non-toxic, minimally toxic and carcinogen-free.
- Recyclable: A product that after its intended end use can be diverted from the solid waste stream for use as a raw material in another product.
- Reduced packaging
- Upgradeable: The ability to increase a product's performance or features without replacing the product.
- Water efficient: A product that is in the upper 25 percent of water efficiency for all similar products

V. Product Specific Green Recommendations:

Consistent with environmentally sound purchasing practices, staff will make every effort to purchase goods and services that have the environmental attributes described above and which meet the standards of third-party environmental certification programs. The following is a summary of specific environmental certification programs for various product categories.

Product Category

Certification Program

Appliances & equipment

Energy Star: identifies products that are among the most energy-efficient on the market. This symbol applies to products in the following categories: major appliances, heating, cooling and ventilation, consumer electronics, office equipment, windows and doors, some lighting (not fixtures), some commercial equipment.

Energy Star Canada:

www.oeenrcan.gc.ca/energystar/english/consumers/index.cfm

Cleaning Supplies and Housekeeping Services

Green Seal and. or Eco-Logo certification systems:

Recognize several product categories and services including environmentally preferable cleaning products.

Green Seal: www.greenseal.org; Eco- Logo: www.ecologo.org.

Floor coverings, Carpets, Adhesives and Cushions

Green Label and Green Label Plus (Carpet & Rug Institute) certification: for low emitting carpet, adhesive and cushion products to protect indoor air quality.
www.carpet-rug.org/commercial-customers/green-building-and-the-environment/green-label-plus/index.cfm

American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Sustainable Carpet Assessment Standard: aimed at reducing the environmental footprint of carpet, including landfill use, carbon dioxide emissions, energy consumption, waste generation, water usage and hazardous air pollutants per square yard of carpet.
www.carpet-rug.org/commercial-customers/green-building-and-the-environment/ansi-sustainability-standard.cfm

Furniture

EcoLogo Certification Program Office Furniture & Panel Systems
www.ecologo.org/en/seeourcriteria/details.asp?ccd_id=258

GREENGUARD Certification Standards for Low-Emitting Products and the GREENGUARD Product Emission Standard For Children & Schools: establishes acceptable indoor air standards for indoor products and furniture.
www.greenguard.org/Default.aspx?tabid=109
www.greenguard.org/Default.aspx?tabid=110

SCS Sustainable Choice - Scientific Certification Systems Eco Products and Indoor Advantage Program: certification services for a broad range of products including office furniture systems, components, and seating, building materials, carpet and rug, hard surface flooring, paints, finishes, wood products, and cleaning products.
www.scs-certified.com/ecoproducts/indoorairquality/standards.html

IT/Computers

Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT): evaluates computer desktops, laptops, and monitors based on 51 environmental criteria.
www.epeat.net

Paints

Eco-Logo: standard for low-VOC paints, stains and varnishes.
www.ecologo.org/en/seeourcriteria/details.asp?ccd_id=272

Green Seal: standard for low-VOC paints and coatings, including wall, anti-corrosive, and reflective coatings, floor paints and primers and undercoats. (The standard does not include stains, clear finishes, recycled latex paint, specialty (industrial, marine or automotive) coatings, or paint sold in aerosol cans.
www.greenseal.org/findaproduct/paints_coatings.cfm

Socially Responsible: The products are created without the exploitation of workers or the community.

Wood Products/Lumber Forest Stewardship Council Smart Wood and Scientific Certification Systems (SCS): sustainably harvested forest and chain of custody forest products, including secondary products such as for millworks, casework, and furniture, for paper and printers; and, distributors of FSC-certified products (“FSC Pure”, FSC Mixed Sources” and FSC recycled”).
www.rainforest-alliance.org/forestry.cfm
www.scs-certified.com/forestry/forest_coc.html

V. Other Resources:

North American Green Purchasing Initiative: Self Assessment Tool: Highlights the environmental considerations faced at each step of the procurement process
http://www.cec.org/pubs_docs/documents/index.cfm?varlan=english&ID=1411

Sustainable Purchasing Network is a learning resource for corporate, not-for-profit, academic, government, public sector, labour, and co-operative organizations in their sustainability purchasing efforts. <http://www.buysmartbc.com/>

Responsible Purchasing Network: Produces Purchasing Guides for a range of products and services, including: [Bottled Water](#), [Cleaners](#), [Computers](#), [Copy Paper](#), [Green Power](#), [Fleets](#), [Light-Duty Tires and Wheel Weights](#), [Lighting](#), [Office Electronics](#), and [Paint](#).
http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org/purchasing_guides/all/index.php