**MODEL SPECIFICATIONS AND PURCHASING GUIDELINES FOR
ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PURCHASING OF OFFICE SUPPLIES**

NERC Requests Your Review

Review Period: May 19 – June 22

I.   INTRODUCTION

This document provides purchasers and environmentalists with model specifications and purchasing guidelines for the environmentally preferable purchasing (EPP) of office supplies.

Please note: Draft EPP specifications for monochrome toner cartridges, and copy and multipurpose paper – 20 lb. (aka: printing, writing, copy paper) aren't included in this document, but are available for review at:

- Monochrome Toner Cartridges Draft Specifications for Review
- Copy & Multipurpose Paper Draft Specifications for Review

Please email Mary Ann Remolador, NERC's Assistant Director, with your edits, comments, and suggestions no later than **June 19**.

The specifications will be finalized and posted on the NERC website by July 31.

II.   OFFICE SUPPLIES EPP SPECIFICATIONS

The following are minimum and preferred specifications for office supplies that often rank as the highest expenditures and quantity purchases. See the table beginning on the next page.

Product Categories	Minimum EPP Specifications	Preferred EPP Specifications
Paper Products: Specifications for copy and multipurpose paper are available in a separate document, the *Multipurpose Paper EPP Specifications.* See link above.		
Address, Shipping, File Folder Sheet-Style Labels	• 30% PCRC [1] • No antimicrobial coatings	• 100% RC[2] with a minimum of 50% PCRC • 100% water-based recyclable adhesive
Calendars (paper only)	• 30% PCRC	• 100% RC paper with a minimum of 50% PCRC • 90% PCRC wire or no wire • 100% PCRC paper backing
Catalog Envelopes - Kraft, white, and colored (including manila) (paper only)	• 20% PCRC	• 100% RC with a minimum of 50% PCRC
Envelopes: Woven (paper only)	• 30% PCRC	• 100% RC with a minimum of 50% PCRC
Envelopes: Kraft, unbleached (paper only)	• 30% PCRC	• 100% RC with a minimum of 50% PCRC
File Folders, Hanging File Folders (paper only)	• 30% PCRC	• 100% RC with a minimum of 50% PCRC
Post-it® Notes/Sticky Notes	• 30% PCRC	• 100% RC with a minimum of 30% PCRC • Plant-based adhesive
Writing Pads	• 30% PCRC	• 100% RC with a minimum of 50% PCRC
Desktop Accessories		
Desk Trays (Polystyrene)	• 25% PCRC • No antimicrobial coatings	• A minimum of 50% PCRC • No antimicrobial coatings
Staplers	• 30% RC • No antimicrobial coatings	• If plastic, a minimum of 50% RC • If metal, 100% RC
Tape Dispensers	• 100% RC • No antimicrobial coatings	• 100% RC with a minimum of 30% PCRC • No antimicrobial coatings
Other Supplies		
Binder (3-Ring): Chipboard or cardboard only	• 75% PCRC • Readily recyclable/easily • de-constructible • No antimicrobial coatings	
Binder (3-Ring): Plastic with chipboard or cardboard interior	• 30% PCRC • Non-vinyl • No antimicrobial coatings	• A minimum of 40% PCRC • Non-vinyl • No antimicrobial coatings
Binder (3-Ring): Pressboard only	• 30% PCRC minimum • No antimicrobial coatings	
Binder (3-Ring): Solid plastic	• Non-vinyl; • No antimicrobial coatings	• A minimum of 30% PCRC • Non-vinyl • No antimicrobial coatings

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[1] PCRC – Post-consumer Recycled Content
[2] RC – Recycled Content

Product Categories	Minimum EPP Specifications	Preferred EPP Specifications
Clipboards: Hardboard	• 100% RC • No antimicrobial coatings	
Clipboards: Metal	• 30% RC • No antimicrobial coatings	• 100% RC • No antimicrobial coatings
Clipboards: Plastic	• 30% PCRC • No antimicrobial coatings	• A minimum of 60% PCRC • No antimicrobial coatings
Correction Tape	• No antimicrobial coatings	
Dry-Erase Markers	• 50% RC • Low/no odor • No antimicrobial coatings	• A minimum of 90% RC • Low/no odor • No antimicrobial coatings • Refillable
Highlighters	• 50% RC • Low/no odor • No antimicrobial coatings	• Barrel contains 100% RC with a minimum of 30% PCRC • Low/no odor • No antimicrobial coatings
Hole Punches	• If plastic, no antimicrobial coatings	• If plastic or metal, a minimum of 30% PCRC • No antimicrobial coatings
Mechanical Pencils	• 50% RC • Refillable • No antimicrobial coatings	• A minimum of 70% RC with a minimum of 30% PCRC • Refillable • No antimicrobial coatings
Paper Clips	• 50% PCRC • Non-vinyl/non-plastic coated • No antimicrobial coatings	• 100% RC, with a minimum of 50% PCRC Non-vinyl/non-plastic coated • No antimicrobial coatings
Permanent Markers	• 50% RC • Low/no odor • No antimicrobial coatings	• Barrel contains 100% RC with a minimum of 30% PCRC • Low/no odor • No antimicrobial coatings
Pens	• 50% RC • Refillable and refills available with 50% RC • No antimicrobial coatings	• A minimum of 70% RC with a minimum of 30% PCRC • Refillable and refills available with 70% RC and 30% PCRC • No antimicrobial coatings
Scissors	• 30% RC • No antimicrobial coatings	• Plastic Handles – a minimum 70% RC with a minimum 30% PCRC • Metal – 30% RC • No antimicrobial coatings
Tape		• Plastic Core – a minimum 100% RC • Tape contains plant-based materials
Wood Pencils	• 100% reclaimed or FSC-certified wood • No antimicrobial coatings	

III.   PURCHASING GUIDELINES

A. Use of Minimum Specifications as Starting Point with Potential Vendors

The specifications above are intended as a guide for working with potential vendors. Once you have established that bidders can supply the *Minimum EPP Specifications*, inquire if they can provide products with greater levels of recycled content and additional EPP criteria, as indicated above as *Preferred EPP Specifications*.

B. Use of Core List & Market Basket List

Since office supplies contracts include such a large number of products, it is advisable to create a shortlist of products (Core List) that are your highest expenditures and/or quantity purchased. The Core List can then be used to create your Market Basket List for the price evaluation of your Request for Proposals/Responses or for your Invitation to Bid. The Market Basket List can also serve as your highest-discount list during the course of the resulting contract.

It is advisable to avoid including non-EPP products in your Market Basket List. Bidders are required to offer you their best prices on the products in the Market Basket List. By only including the EPP products, you are assured to receive affordable prices on these products. These reduced rates for EPP products will also encourage the greater purchase of EPP products over traditional ones.

C. RECOMMENDED VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

1. Allow for Core List Changes Beyond Volume/Spend Patterns

Require the vendor to allow for changes to the Core List during pricing updates so as to be able to add new EPP items to the Core List and remove old/outdated products. By allowing for Core List revisions beyond traditional changes in volume/spend patterns, you can achieve competitive pricing on new EPP items, thus improving the end-user incentive for buying green.

2. Require that EPP Products are Clearly Identified, Defined, and Found in Vendor Catalogs

Require that the vendor identify EPP items in their product catalogs (both hard copy and online), along with prominent information about how the vendor defines EPP (e.g. if the vendor uses a symbol or icon to identify a "greener" product; make sure the information about what the symbol/icon represents is clearly available). Ensure that any EPP symbols or icons are displayed along with EPP attribute details per product (e.g. a product with a recycled content symbol would also have in its product description details about the % total and % post-consumer recycled content). Also require that EPP items are easily found within online product catalogs through search filters, and related navigational tools

3. Consolidate Deliveries

Select a vendor willing to pre-arrange the day on which deliveries are made. [This requires the purchasing entity to have previously set up a plan whereby all purchases from the office supplies vendors is only delivered on a certain day of the week. The limited frequency of deliveries will reduce your carbon footprint by reducing the:

    a. Amount of fossil fuels required by delivery vehicles for your purchases.
    b. Carbon emissions from fossil-fuel burning delivery vehicles.
    c. Vehicle traffic at the workplace and on the roads.]

4. Minimize Use of Shipping Packaging & Use Recycled Content & Readily Recyclable Packaging Material

Require that the vendor to commit to all or some of the following requirements:

a. Minimize shipping packaging used ("right-size" order packaging).
b. Use reusable shipping materials.
c. Use shipping and packaging materials that contain 100% recycled content and facilitate reductions in carbon emissions during transport (e.g. lightweight materials).
d. Use shipping/packaging materials that can easily be recycled in your local recycling program.
e. Only use materials that comply with toxics in packaging laws.
f. Work with product manufacturers to improve the recyclability of product packaging.

5. Provide Annual Purchasing Reports with EPP Data

Require that the vendor provide annual purchasing reports to the purchasing entity on all office supply purchases, with breakdowns detailing all EPP purchases.

Require the vendor to provide details on how it defines EPP. By tracking the EPP purchases through vendor reports, it enables purchasers to monitor EPP expenditures for performance and opportunities for improvement. At a minimum, the following information should be included in the reports: list of items by SKU number and product description, EPP attributes of items (see list above), the total quantity purchased per item, and the total expenditure per item.

Optional additional requirement: Require that the vendor provide EPP data by department, delivery location, or other demographic. that is most applicable to your organization.

6. No Idling of Delivery Trucks

Require that all delivery drivers turn off their engines upon stopping at the delivery location, or not allow an engine to idle at any location for more than 20 seconds, except in the following situations:

a. The health and safety of employees, sub-contractors or the public is compromised by turning off the vehicle.
b. The engine is required to power auxiliary equipment (e.g. hoist, lift platforms, hydraulic tools, inverters, compactors, medical equipment, specialized public safety radio communication and computer systems, etc.). Or,
c. Vehicle/equipment manufacturer requires additional idle time for warm up or cool down for efficient and proper mechanical or functional operation of the unit.

D. ADDITIONAL VENDOR PREFERENCES

1. Green Vendor Fairs – Seek out vendors that are willing to hold or participate in a green vendor fair so staff can see the different EPP products the vendor sells, can speak directly to the vendor, and get their questions answered at the same time.

2. Additional Online Catalog Features – Seek out vendors that have additional online catalog features that can support your EPP program such as:

a. EPP items display first in online catalog search results.
b. Product auto-substitution—pre-identified conventional products are automatically substituted with pre-identified EPP items when end-user places conventional item in online cart.
c. Blocking/restricting pre-identified items from being purchased online.

3. **Additional Recycling Programs** – Seek out vendors that can help you recycle, or take back for recycling, products or packaging that are not typically accepted in your local recycling program. Examples may include: toner, writing utensils, molded plastic or plastic film, or 3-ring binders.