



Metric for Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHG) Savings

One strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is to purchase products that use less energy. Products that use less energy in their manufacture include recycled products, such as recycled paper, plastic and rubber. Savings in emissions from the manufacture of recycled products can be calculated through a life-cycle analysis.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) used a life-cycle process to produce a tool designed to help businesses and individuals calculate the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission savings of purchasing recycled products with varying degrees of postconsumer recycled content. EPA's Recycled Content (ReCon) Tool can be found at http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/waste/calculators/ReCon_home.html.

Below, through the use of EPA's ReCon Tool, we have identified types of products that can be purchased to save an equivalent of one ton of carbon dioxide.

One metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent is eliminated under any one of the following purchasing scenarios, assuming the alternative product would have been a virgin material:

Recycled Paper

- 20 cases of 30% postconsumer recycled content copy paper
- 6 cases of 100% postconsumer recycled content copy paper

The City of Berkeley's estimated annual purchase in FY 2007-2008 of 100% postconsumer paper is over 4,240 cases, equivalent to a reduction of 707 metric tons of carbon dioxide.

Recycled Plastic

- 4 hexagon-shaped recycled plastic picnic tables (98% postconsumer)
- 15 recycled plastic park benches with backs (98% postconsumer)
- 100 recycled plastic, 96 gallon, wheeled yard waste carts (25% postconsumer)
- 12,000 recycled plastic office desk side containers (25% postconsumer)

The City of Livermore purchased 4 hexagon recycled plastic tables for City Hall eliminating one metric ton of carbon dioxide equivalent.

Recycled Rubber

- 900 pounds of a recycled rubber product (100% postconsumer)
- 914 pounds of a recycled rubber product (98% postconsumer)

The City of Dublin offset 12 metric tons of carbon dioxide by installing close to 11,000 pounds of recycled rubber sidewalks.

The City of San Leandro offset over 8 metric tons of carbon dioxide by purchasing recycled rubber speed cushions.