

Sustainable Purchasing Guide

Paper Office Supplies



Use this Guide When Purchasing

- Color copy papers and other printing/writing papers*
- File folders
- Calendars
- Notebooks and notepads
- Sticky notes
- Envelopes
- Shipping and storage materials
- Other paper office supplies



Paper fiber is a common material for many office supplies - from sticky notes to storage boxes. Paper office supplies purchased directly by staff must contain a minimum of 30% post-consumer recycled content when equal in cost and function to comply with California’s Senate Bill 1383, aka SB 1383, which went into effect January 2022.

**20# white copy paper is addressed in the “White Copy Paper” Sustainable Purchasing Guide*

How to Purchase

Check with your central procurement office or administrative staff to find out if you have any contracts that employees are required to use to purchase office supplies. When seeking these products in a store or online, check the product details to confirm the product meets the Minimum Requirements listed below.

Product Requirements- *specify or seek:*

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS/SPECIFICATIONS	LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% post-consumer recycled content¹ <p><i>SB 1383 Reporting Requirements</i></p> <p><i>Coordinate with your agency’s SB 1383 lead to maintain required documentation, including:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records verifying the minimum recycled content of the paper product • Written documentation from the vendor certifying that the paper product is recyclable • Invoice or other proof of purchase that includes paper type and volume details <p><small>¹ Note: It may not be possible to find 30% post-consumer recycled content options in all paper product categories. When that is the case, employees are encouraged to purchase the product option with the maximum percent post-consumer recycled content available (such as 10% or 20% for some categories). SB 1383 reporting requirements still apply; buyers must include justification when reporting purchases of products that have less than 30% post-consumer recycled content.</small></p>	<p><i>Minimum Requirements plus one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50-100% post-consumer recycled content • Green Seal certified • FSC certified “Recycled” or “Mix” • Any non-post-consumer recycled content fiber is agricultural residue fiber • Bleaching process is Processed Chlorine Free (PCF) • Made with Green-e certified renewable energy

Ecolabels to Look For



Related Tips

Reduce paper use and waste by:

- Utilizing electronic options for calendars, document storage and retention, report distribution, training materials, etc. to reduce the need to purchase office supplies.
- Checking with other departments to see if they have excess supplies you can use.
- Reusing file folders by using labels or turning them inside out.
- Making your own notepads from one-sided used paper.
- Recycling paper products using office recycling containers.
- Reusing intact boxes and packaging materials.

Benefits

Buying paper office supplies made with post-consumer recycled content instead of virgin fiber:

- Reduces energy use 31% and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 40%.
- Helps prevent deforestation, which protects wildlife habitats and waterways, and promotes carbon sequestration.
- Creates markets for paper collected in local office and community recycling programs.
- Consumes less water and creates less water pollution.
- Prevents paper waste from going into landfills, where it can form methane gas, a potent GHG.

Additional Resources

- [SB 1383 Paper Purchasing Requirements Resources from CalRecycle](#)
- [Alameda County SB 1383 Paper Procurement Resources](#)
- [Guide to Environmentally Preferable Paper Office Products in Alameda County](#)
- [Alameda County Green Purchasing Success Stories: Office Supplies](#)
- Check the [StopWaste Sustainable Purchasing Website](#) for additional implementation resources such as: compliant product lists, cooperative contract opportunities, SB 1383 tips, and other support tools.

PRODUCT REGISTRIES

Find/verify certified products by using the following online certified product registries:

- [Green Seal Certified Directory](#)

Note: There is not an online certified product directory for FSC products. Instead, look for the FSC ecolabel on the product and/or verify with the product manufacturer.

ABOUT SENATE BILL 1383

SB 1383 ([14 CCR 18993.3 et seq.](#)) set methane emission reduction targets for California, with a focus on reducing organic waste to landfills – a key source of methane emissions. The regulations established purchasing requirements for recycled content paper to ensure strong markets for recovered paper and to keep paper out of landfills.