

Sustainable Purchasing Guide

Toner Cartridges



Use this Guide When Purchasing

- Monochrome or color laser toner cartridges for printers

No matter the type of printer you have, the cost of the toner over the life of the printer is likely to far exceed the upfront price of that printer. Yet, you can lower toner costs while still getting quality products and reducing associated environmental impacts by choosing remanufactured and/or high-yield toner cartridges.



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 toner cartridges - they might be included in office supplies contracts. When seeking these products in a store or online, check the product details to confirm the product meets the Minimum Requirements listed below. If toner is included as part of a managed print services contract, require the vendor to use toner cartridges that meet the following Minimum Requirements as well.

Product Requirements- *specify or seek:*

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS/SPECIFICATIONS	LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remanufactured toner cartridge OR <ul style="list-style-type: none">• “High-yield” toner cartridge* AND <p>The vendor (or cartridge manufacturer) offers a free, easily accessible toner cartridge recycling program.</p> <p><i>*Note: pay attention to toner cartridge expiration dates; a high-yield toner cartridge may not make sense for a very low-use printer if the toner would not be used up before expiring.</i></p>	<p><i>Minimum Requirements plus one or more of the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remanufactured toner cartridge by a company that is STMC-certified• Remanufactured AND high-yield toner cartridge*• The toner cartridge has been tested and documented to be compliant with EPEAT-registered imaging equipment and is labeled as such (<i>this means the imaging equipment meets EPEAT’s low-emissions standard when that toner cartridge is used</i>)• The vendor’s cartridge recycling program sends its spent cartridges to a STMC-certified remanufacturer or to an original equipment manufacturer (OEM) that incorporates the reclaimed plastic into new toner cartridges

Ecolabels to Look For



Related Tips

- High-yield cartridges can often be identified by their product label including one of the following codes: X, XL, XLL, HY, XHY, etc. For example, the high-yield version of a HP 30A cartridge is HP 30X.
- When comparing the price of standard and high-yield toner cartridges, calculate the price per page using the page yield information on each product.
- Watch out for toner cartridges labeled “compatible” but are not remanufactured. These are often single-use “knock-off” products that cannot be remanufactured at the end of their useful life.

Benefits

Using remanufactured toner cartridges:

- Reduces plastic waste and demand for virgin plastic.
- Saves money, as remanufactured toner cartridges are typically 30 to 50% less expensive than “virgin” cartridges offered by OEMs.
- Reduces greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions compared to manufacturing cartridges from new raw materials.
- Creates markets for toner cartridges collected through recycling programs.

Using high-yield toner cartridges:

- Prevents waste by getting more printed pages per cartridge.
- Saves money, since their cost per page is typically lower than that of standard-yield toner cartridges.

Additional Resources

- [List of STMC-certified companies](#)
- Check the [StopWaste Sustainable Purchasing Website](#) for additional implementation resources such as: compliant product lists, cooperative contract opportunities, example specifications, and other support tools.

WHAT DOES “HIGH-YIELD” MEAN?

While there is no technical standard for this term, a high-yield cartridge usually contains about twice as much toner as an equivalent standard-yield cartridge, which translates into more printed pages per cartridge.

REMANUFACTURED AND REFILLED ARE NOT THE SAME

STMC-remanufactured toner cartridges are thoroughly inspected and cleaned, and any defective or worn parts replaced. They are then tested according to reputable cartridge performance standards to ensure the product meets or exceeds OEM cartridge performance. Refilled cartridges only involve adding toner to a used cartridge, and thus, are not recommended as a reliable substitute for OEM cartridges.

BENEFITS CALCULATOR

Use the [toner cartridge recycling GHG reduction calculator](#) developed by the International Imaging Technology Council to calculate GHG savings associated with recycling your toner cartridges.

MORE SAVINGS POSSIBLE

Offices can save money by moving away from desktop printers and consolidating/centralizing printers with high-capacity multi-function devices (MFDs). To learn more, check out the following guide. While the guide was written for universities, many of the same approaches and benefits apply to office spaces. [Ditching Desktop Printers: A Behavior Change Guide to Cutting Paper Use, Energy Consumption, and Costs](#)

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