



## **City of Boston**

**Boston City Hall ~ One City Hall Plaza ~ Room 808**

**Boston, Massachusetts 02201**

### **Environmentally Preferable Procurement**

On July 3, 2008, Mayor Thomas M. Menino issued an Executive Order Relative to Greening City Building Maintenance and Operations. Among other directives, the Mayor ordered that this Environmentally Preferable Procurement Guidelines document be issued, and that all City departments adhere to these guidelines.

The City of Boston is a large consumer of goods and services, and the procurement decisions of our employees and contractors can have a significant impact on the environment. The City can remain fiscally responsible and promote practices that improve public health and safety, conserve natural resources, and reduce pollution, including the greenhouse gases that cause climate change, by including environmental considerations in our procurement decisions. These factors, of course, will be considered along with our traditional concerns of price, performance, and availability.

The purpose of this document is to outline the City of Boston's guidelines for environmentally preferable procurement (EPP), also sometimes called "green purchasing."

### **ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PROCUREMENT**

The goal of EPP is to make procurement decisions that:

- Reduce waste by optimizing product efficiency and effectiveness
- Conserve natural resources such as energy and water
- Minimize environmental impacts from pollution, including greenhouse gases
- Eliminate or reduce toxics that create hazards to employees and the community
- Reduce the amount of materials put into landfills

- Support recycling markets
- Encourage manufacturers and vendors to reduce environmental impacts in their production and distribution systems
- Create a model that encourages other purchasers to adopt EPP

Notwithstanding these objectives, no City department should accept a product or service that does not fulfill its intended purpose, excludes adequate competition, or is not available at a reasonable price or in a reasonable period of time.

## **EPP STANDARDS**

There is no single definition of environmentally preferable products and services. In general, they are those that would minimize harm to human health or the environment when compared with competing products and services, because of the way they are made, used, transported, stored, packaged, or disposed of. The evaluation of these products should include an examination of all phases of a product's life cycle. There are varying opportunities for value, cost, and cost savings in each phase, and in many cases specifications can be written to take advantage of these opportunities.

Some characteristics of environmentally preferable products are:

- Energy and water efficiency in both production and use
- Made from renewable or recycled materials, such as wood from sustainably harvested forests
- Refurbished or remanufactured, for example, remanufactured toner cartridges
- Carcinogen-free
- Low toxicity; free of persistent, bioaccumulative, toxic (PBT) chemicals
- Heavy-metal free (e.g., no lead, mercury, cadmium)
- Chlorofluorocarbon (CFC)-free (e.g., unbleached materials, chlorine-free manufacturing)
- Low volatile organic compound (VOC) content
- Reduced packaging
- Durable and long-lasting
- Reusable, refillable, rechargeable
- Recyclable, compostable, biodegradable

Depending on the product or service, there may be trade-offs between various attributes.

### **Energy efficiency**

All electronic equipment purchased should be among the most energy-efficient available. In particular, incandescent lighting should be replaced by more efficient systems, wherever possible. Energy efficiency includes not only the amount of power required for operation, but also, for example, the ability to quickly go into and come out of standby mode.

The Energy Star program (<http://www.energystar.gov>) is a partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE). An Energy Star label indicates that a product meets the program's product-specific energy-efficiency specifications. For product categories without Energy Star specifications, the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP, <http://www1.eere.energy.gov/femp>) designates products in the top 25 percent of all similar products when ranked by energy efficiency. Energy Star and FEMP products generally offer: reduced energy costs without compromising quality or performance, significant return on investment, extended product life, and decreased maintenance. **Wherever applicable, City of Boston purchases should carry Energy Star or FEMP designations.** Where there are no FEMP or Energy Star standards, departments should consider the purchase of products that conserve electrical power or natural gas to the maximum extent possible.

### **Recycled content**

The EPA has also established minimum recycled content standards for many products, including paper and other office products, construction products, landscaping products, and others. (See <http://www.epa.gov/epaoswer/non-hw/procure/products.htm>) The City of Boston expects all City procurement to meet or exceed the minimum recycled content recommendations established by EPA.

### **Computers and monitors**

Departments planning to purchase any information technology hardware (computers, printers, etc.) should consult the City's **Green Information Technology Roadmap**, and consult with the MIS Department.

EPEAT is a program of the Green Electronics Council to assess the environmental impacts associated with the manufacture, use, and disposal of computers and monitors. EPEAT criteria address energy conservation (incorporating Energy Star standards), environmentally sensitive materials, recycled content, end-of-life design, packaging, and more. **City of Boston purchases should be at the EPEAT Silver level or higher.**

### **Toxins and Pollutants**

To the extent practicable, no cleaning or disinfecting products (i.e., for janitorial use) shall contain ingredients that are carcinogens, mutagens, or teratogens. These include chemicals on EPA's Toxics Release Inventory (<http://www.epa.gov/tri/chemical/index.htm>). For more information, see the City of Boston Green Cleaning Policy.

When maintaining buildings and when purchasing materials such as paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture, and casework, the City shall use the lowest amount of VOCs (volatile organic compounds), highest recycled content, and low or no formaldehyde. Products that use polyvinyl chloride (PVC)—such as some office binders, furniture, and flooring—shall be eliminated, whenever practicable.

### **Paper and paper products**

Departments shall use paper and paper products with the recommended levels of recycled content. Paper, paper products, and janitorial paper products should also be unbleached and processed without chlorine or chlorine derivatives. Paper, paper products, and construction products made from non-wood, plant-based contents such as agricultural crops and residues are encouraged whenever practicable.

### **Remanufactured products**

The City shall purchase remanufactured products such as laser toner cartridges, furniture, and equipment whenever practicable.

### **Packaging**

To the extent possible, suppliers should be required to reduce the amount of packaging material, to use recycled material for packaging, and to recycle it after delivery.

### **End-of-life**

Where appropriate, procurement of equipment should include take-back provisions in the bid and contract that make suppliers responsible for ensuring that safe recycling occurs at the end of a product's useful life.

## **Landscaping**

Workers and contractors providing landscaping services for the City shall be encouraged to employ sustainable landscape management practices whenever possible, including integrated pest management, grass-cycling, drip irrigation, composting, and procurement and use of mulch and compost from regionally generated plant debris and food waste programs.

Plants should be selected to minimize waste by choosing species appropriate to the micro-climate and species that can grow to their natural size in the space allotted them, and perennials rather than annuals for color. Native and drought-tolerant plants that require no or minimal watering once established are preferred. Hardscapes and landscape structures constructed of recycled content materials are encouraged.

## **PROCUREMENT PROCESS**

Procurement is done under the authority of the City of Boston Charter and Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 30B.

Procurement for goods in the City is centralized and is done by the Purchasing Department. For items commonly used by many departments, the Purchasing Department will continue to make decisions that are in compliance with the Environmentally Preferable Procurement Guidelines. There are many commodities that are already compliant (see Appendix A). For department-specific items, the expertise of that department is needed in developing the specifications for bid. The Purchasing Department staff will work with the department staff to ensure that the EPP guidelines are met.

Procurement for services is decentralized in Boston; each department contracts for its own services. Departments are required to comply with the EPP guidelines in bidding and contracting for services. Department Heads must ensure that the bid and contract documents define the standards that the vendor must comply with relative to the EPP policy.

The ongoing development and adjustments of EPP standards will be guided by an advisory committee made up of the Purchasing Department, the Environment Department, the Property Management Department, the Management of Informational Services Department, the School Department, and the Public Health Commission. This committee will:

- Assist departments implementing EPP

- Evaluate EPP products where the cost differential is great or the quality is uncertain
- Assess and make recommendations on the specifications needed to obtain the desired qualities in a product
- Measure the City's progress in environmental purchasing
- Expand central purchasing agreements for EPP products and add them, clearly identified, to our PeopleSoft database
- Obtain greater and more economical access to EPP products

Suggestions for changes to the EPP guidelines should be sent to the Purchasing Department.

### **Departmental responsibilities**

Every City department is responsible for ensuring that its employees, contractors, and vendors are aware of the City's EPP policy, that its ITBs and RFPs contain the appropriate language for implementing EPP, and that its procurement decisions are consistent with EPP. Necessarily, the appropriate language will depend on the product or service being sought. Departments should work with the Purchasing Department to develop the most extensive EPP specifications possible.

### **Balancing Environmental Considerations with Performance, Availability, and Cost**

The City of Boston's commitment to environmentally preferable goods and services does not reduce the necessity that they also meet performance standards and requirements of the City at a competitive cost. However, cost evaluations should consider complete life-cycle costs, including acquisition, warranties, operation, supplies, maintenance, insurance and other liability, and disposal. EPP products often have a higher purchase price than their less efficient counterparts, but can save money over their lifetime, because they use less energy, often have a longer life, and typically incur less maintenance cost. These elements must be built into the bid to be factor in the award.

In cases where the life-cycle cost of an EPP product might be greater than a non-EPP counterpart, the criteria for award must be stated in the bid. The Purchasing Department will work with individual departments to establish criteria for determining how to include these elements in the bid.