

New Hanover County Department of Environmental Management Buy Recycled Policy

The Buy-Recycled Policy represents a philosophical and fiscal commitment to the acquisition and use of recycled content products purchased while in the service of citizens. It recognizes a continuing need to be environmentally responsible.

All Environmental Management divisions shall maximize opportunities to reduce the amount of waste they generate, to recover as many materials for recycling from their operations as possible, and to maximize the procurement of recycled products. Managers will make efforts to educate their employees about buying recycled products.

Definitions

Environmentally responsible – buying products and using products that have minimal impact on the environment through their composition and recyclability.

Fiscally responsible – the cost factor or purchaser price for recycled products, or more environmentally responsible items, should be consistent with a suggested variance of 10-15% above the market expense for similar non-recycled items.

Recycled materials – products made with an identifiable percentage (1-100%) of post-consumer material or of discarded virgin material salvaged from the industrial waste stream. High post-consumer content products – those with a minimum of 30% post-consumer content, are considered better environmental purchases than their virgin counterparts.

Waste reduction – the act of avoiding, eliminating and reducing the amount of solid waste generated at the source.

Purchasing

Environmental Management will seek to buy and use products, needed for the service of County citizens, made with recycled materials if the items are reasonably competitive with non-recycled products, and meet or exceed the quality specifications expected of comparable products. Product performance including: ease of use, durability, maintenance, and performance level should be taken into account.

Managers and their employees who purchase goods are required to make every effort to identify recycled products and communicate to their distributors the desire to purchase, first and foremost, recycled materials when they fall within the required cost and quality specifications.

Cost

Managers are advised that the purchase of some recycled products may exceed the costs of non-recycled products. This factor alone should not determine the purchase. Cost should be compared to the environmental benefits, performance quality, and the life cycle cost of the item considered. Generally, if the cost of the recycled product does not exceed

the cost of the virgin equivalent product by more than 10-15% managers are authorized to acquire the product.

Tracking

Communication and information sharing between managers regarding progress in buying more recycled products will ensure the continued success of the policy. Formal and informal reports of product availability, prices, and performance should become commonplace in departmental purchasing.

While no formal tracking policy is in place at this time, managers should track applicable purchases in a manner that is convenient and sensible to them. At the end of a six month trial period a more formal policy will be established.

Recycled Paper

Managers are directed to purchase and use recycled content paper for all documentation whenever possible. Special emphasis should be given to buying products and materials made with a minimum of 30% post consumer content.

Waste Reduction

All Department employees are asked to work toward reducing waste at its source, in other words, preventing waste before it is created. As an example, office staff will maximize efforts to:

- Use email when possible to avoid using paper
- Reuse manila envelopes when possible (interoffice) instead of new ones
- Save reusable paper and use the blank side for scratch paper or for printing drafts
- Use routing slips when distributing interoffice information to reduce the use of photocopies
- Make double-sided photocopies whenever feasible. When new copy machines are to be purchased, duplexing capabilities shall be purchased within comparable price parameters
- All copying should be executed with caution to avoid paper waste
- Reusable mugs should be used for coffee/beverages, as opposed to using disposal cups