



Environmentally Preferable Paper Purchasing Guidance

November 2002

Purchasers can influence the paper production process through the paper attributes that they demand, as well as through the products that they specify or reject. Consumer demand has long been an important driver in the development of environmentally preferable papers and in influencing the technologies and investments necessary to make them. In order to most effectively harness purchasers' power to steer the paper industry toward more sustainable production methods, we advocate that paper purchasers implement the following guidance.

Make a Commitment:

- Develop an organizational policy commitment to purchase paper with increasingly enhanced environmental characteristics as specified in these guidelines, and set a timetable for the transition. Communicate the commitment to managers and staff, suppliers, customers, partners, and the public.

Minimize Paper Consumption:

- Eliminate excessive and unnecessary paper consumption. Visit www.forestethics.org/reduction for paper reduction strategies. Examples include:
 - Purchasing copiers, printers, and fax machines that can be set to default to double-sided printing.
 - Maximizing paper use efficiency in business and other settings.
 - Rethinking design processes to minimize printing and copying waste.
 - Minimizing unsolicited mail, both sent and received.
 - Minimizing overruns and maximizing sell-through for published materials.

Maximize Recycled Content:

- Eliminate the use of paper and paper products (including newsprint, packaging, tissue products, office papers, and publications) made from 100 percent virgin fiber content.
- Switch to paper that contains the highest postconsumer recycled content feasible for each specific need, but no less than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) minimums for federal agencies. Currently the EPA minimums for printing and writing papers, for example, are 30 percent for uncoated papers and 10 percent for coated papers.
- After switching to recycled paper, set a timeline for increasing the postconsumer content as quickly as possible to higher percentages. For printing and writing papers, this should be no less than 50 percent for uncoated papers and 30 percent for coated papers. Notify suppliers that papers with these contents or higher are expected.
- After maximizing postconsumer recycled content, give preference to paper products that also contain other recovered materials (e.g., agricultural residues, preconsumer fiber).

Be Selective about Virgin Fiber Content:

- Supply Origin:** Verify with suppliers and manufacturers the source of any virgin fiber content in paper and give preference to suppliers and manufacturers that establish a credible "Chain of Custody" tracking system to reliably identify the origin of fiber sources.
- Endangered Forests:** Give preference to papers guaranteed to be free of fiber that threatens endangered forests. (Some forests are so rare, threatened, or ecologically vulnerable, or are of such

global biological or cultural importance that any logging or commercial use could irreparably damage their conservation value.) End the use of any paper with fiber content known to threaten endangered forests. Environmental groups are compiling information on endangered forests and making it more widely available.

- For information on endangered forests and implementation see the discussion document "*Endangered Forests: High Conservation Value Forests Protection – Guidance for Corporate Commitments.*"

- Forest Conversion to Plantations:** Give preference to papers that can be guaranteed to be free of fibers from the conversion of diverse natural forest ecosystems into plantations.⁴ End the use of any paper with fiber content known to come from recent or ongoing conversions of natural forests to plantations.
- FSC Certification:** Give preference to papers with a remaining virgin tree fiber content that comes from independent, third-party certified forest managers that employ the most environmentally and socially responsible forest management and restoration practices. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is the only acceptable international certification program that comes close to meeting this guidance. (NOTE: FSC supply is not always available, but it will become increasingly available over time if requested.)

For more information see:

- www.fscus.org and www.fscoax.org (FSC US and international web sites)
 - www.certifiedwood.org (certified wood supply database and tracking services)
 - www.forestworld.com (certified wood supply database and tracking services)
 - web sites of certifiers specified on FSC web sites
- Alternative Fibers:** Give preference to papers made from alternative fiber crops (e.g., hemp, kenaf) if Life Cycle Analysis and other comprehensive and credible analysis indicates that alternative fibers are environmentally and socially preferable to other sources of virgin fiber.
 - Genetically Modified Organisms:** Do not buy papers with fiber content known to come from transgenically modified trees and plants that have genes of other animals and plants inserted.

Give Preference to Chlorine-Free Papers:

- Give preference to papers processed without chlorine or chlorine compounds (i.e., "processed chlorine free" or PCF papers), as long as they also meet recycled content goals. (NOTE: Papers processed without chlorine or chlorine compounds are not always available, but will become increasingly available over time if requested. For more information on pulping and bleaching technologies see the attached "Hierarchy of Pulping and Bleaching Processes.")

Spread the Word:

- Print on documents an accurate description of the attributes of the environmentally preferable papers used, in order to raise awareness and accountability.

⁴ This guidance supports FSC's criteria specifying November 1994 as the cut off date for no more conversion of natural forests to plantations. Wood from forests converted to plantations after November 1994 is unacceptable unless the plantations are being restored to natural forests.