

# Environmental Stewardship Purchasing Managers and Federal Bankcard Holders



Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) is a process for selecting “products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose.” EPA purchasers are mandated under a number of regulations and executive orders to buy EPP products and services.

## Why EPP?

Buying green reduces the federal government’s environmental footprint and brings the government’s purchasing power to bear on the market, spurring production of environmentally preferable products and services.

Whatever your job, you likely will be asked to order products that:

- are made with recycled content,
- have less packaging,
- are energy and water efficient,
- do not create hazardous waste,
- contain reduced amounts of toxic chemicals,
- are biobased or made of renewable materials, and
- incorporate other environmentally preferable attributes.

You can help EPA meet this commitment when you use the [government credit card](#) or complete a [purchase requisition](#).

## EPP Statutory Requirements

**Section 6002 of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)** established the federal buy-recycled program. EPA designates recycled-content products in the [Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines \(CPG\)](#) and makes recommendations for purchasing the products in Recovered Materials Advisory Notices. The recommendations mainly pertain to the levels of recycled materials that the designated products should contain, but EPA also identifies relevant government and consensus specifications, such as ASTM standards.

To date, EPA has designated 61 products in the following 8 categories:

- Paper
- Vehicular
- Construction
- Transportation
- Park and Recreation
- Landscaping
- Nonpaper Office
- Miscellaneous

RCRA requires federal agencies to purchase EPA-designated products and to establish Affirmative Procurement Programs—strategies for maximizing the purchases—consisting of four elements: a preference program, promotion program, vendor certification of recycled content, and annual review and monitoring.

**Executive Order (E.O.) 13423**, signed in January 2007, requires agencies to use sustainable environmental practices when acquiring goods and services, including purchasing biobased, environmentally preferable, energy-efficient, water-efficient, and recycled-content products, and using paper of at least 30 percent post-consumer fiber content.

The **Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR)** (Subchapter D, Part 23) requires the government to acquire supplies and services that promote energy and water efficiency, advance the use of renewable energy products, foster markets for emerging technologies, and are composed of the highest percentage of recovered materials practicable.

The EPP requirements also apply to construction, renovation, and leasing of buildings housing EPA employees. Most of the requirements are linked to EPA’s [Environmental Management Systems](#) for implementation.

The **Federal Electronics Challenge (FEC)** is a voluntary program that encourages federal agencies and facilities to purchase greener electronic products, reduce the impacts of the electronics they use, and manage obsolete electronics in an environmentally safe manner.

The **Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT)** is a system to help purchasers in the public and private sectors evaluate, compare, and select desktop computers, notebooks, and monitors based on their environmental attributes. (FAR part 23.705)

## What am I obligated to do?

Before purchasing a product, check whether it is a **CPG-designated product**.

Learn whether biobased products are available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) **preference program for designated biobased products**.

Purchase **ENERGY STAR** qualified products.

Purchase environmentally preferable electronic equipment. For more information, visit the **electronics purchasing** section.

Use EPA's **Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA)** to help meet these requirements.

## Use the EPP program's five guiding principles:

### Environment + Price + Performance = EPP

Include environmental considerations as part of the normal purchasing process.

### Pollution Prevention

Emphasize pollution prevention as part of the purchasing process.

### Life Cycle Perspective/Multiple Attributes

Examine multiple environmental attributes throughout the life cycles of products and services.

### Comparison of Environmental Impacts

Compare environmental impacts when selecting products and services.

### Environmental Performance Information

Collect accurate and meaningful information about the environmental performance of products and services.

Be sure to learn what else you can do, and what resources and training are available, by using the Environmental Stewardship Resource Guide. <http://intranet.epa.gov/intraosw/miswd/e-steward/e-stew.htm>

## EPP Resources

EPP General:

<http://www.epa.gov/epp>

Greening EPA:

<http://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/index.htm>

More green practices:

<http://www.epa.gov/greeningepa/practices/index.htm>

Buying green with the government credit card:

<http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/epp/tools/creditcard.htm>

EPA's green purchasing page:

<http://purchasecard.epa.gov/node/8>

Office of the Federal Environment Executive's green purchasing pages: <http://ofee.gov/gp/gp.asp>

USDA's biobased purchasing information:

<http://www.biobased.oce.usda.gov/fb4p/>

FEC pages:

<http://www.federalelectronicschallenge.net/resources/>

## Quiz

1. Federal agencies are directed to buy products that:
  - A. Are made with recovered content
  - B. Use less packaging
  - C. Are energy efficient
  - D. Do not create hazardous waste or toxic chemicals
  - E. Incorporate other environmentally preferable attributes
  - F. All of the above
2. When you use the government bankcard, you do not have to pay attention to the requirements of the Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines, Executive Order 13423, or the Energy Star program. True or False?
3. It is EPA policy that EPA offices must buy or lease computers, computer peripherals, laptop computers, televisions, printers, fax and copy machines, and mobile phones with environmental attributes. True or False?
4. Mandates on federal agencies to buy green also extend to the contractors supporting them. True or False?
5. There are six guiding principles of environmentally preferable purchasing. True or False?