



# General Guidelines for Sustainable Purchasing

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## **3R's - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle**

In order to conserve natural resources and to protect the environment, to the extent possible, look for products that have the following qualities.

- **General considerations**
  - Quality, function and product life-cycle cost equal or superior to traditional products.
  - Durable (long lasting, reusable, refillable, rechargeable), as opposed to single use or disposable items.
- **Manufacturing considerations**
  - Made of recycled materials, maximizing post-consumer content.
  - Remanufactured products, such as laser toner cartridges, tires, furniture, equipment and automotive parts whenever practicable and cost-effective, but without reducing safety or quality.
  - Made from raw materials obtained in an environmentally sound sustainable manner.
  - Non-toxic or minimally toxic, preferably biodegradable.
  - Manufactured in an environmentally sound, sustainable manner.
- **Operational considerations**
  - Minimizes water and energy use in operation.
  - Causes minimal or no environmental damage during normal use or maintenance.
  - Use of re-refined lubricating and industrial oil for equipment, as long as the product is certified by the American Petroleum Institute (API) as appropriate for use in such equipment.
- **Packaging and shipping considerations**
  - Shipped with minimal packaging, consistent with care of the product.
  - Shipping materials should be made of recycled and/or recyclable materials.
  - Reused pallets and packaging materials.

- Produced locally or regionally to minimize the environmental costs associated with shipping.
- Available for purchase in multi-packs versus singles.
- Avoid air shipments.
- **Product end-of-life management considerations.**
  - Can it be recycled? Recyclable products are those that after their intended use, can be demonstrably diverted from the University's solid waste stream for use as a raw material in the manufacture of another product, preferably higher value uses.
  - Can recycling occur in the immediate area?
  - Can the product be reused? Reusable products can be used several times for an intended use before being discarded. Examples include washable food or beverage containers or refillable ballpoint pens.
  - If it cannot be recycled or reused, can it be disposed of safely?
  - Product disposition should minimize materials that are sent to landfills.

### **Regulations applicable to the University**

- For state-funded research grants, the Commonwealth Procurement Code Act 57 of 1998, section 108 Recycled Materials, encourages use of recycled products over the small procurement limit (currently \$10,000).
- The EPA also has guidelines for "goods, supplies, equipment, materials and printing" using recycled content, and has a certification process for suppliers to use (see the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976). Under state-funded research grants, the State of Pennsylvania provides a preference equal to 5% of the bid amount to any vendor providing the EPA certification (see, Title 53 P.S. Chapter 15, section 4000.1505).

### **Commodity-Specific Guidelines**

The Purchasing department is currently working with University-based and industry experts to develop detailed and technical sustainable purchasing guidance for [specific commodities](#) such as carpeting, cleaning products, computers, lighting, paper, and toner.