

# Buying Recycled Products

**For recycling to succeed, we need to finish what we start and buy recycled products. In addition to the need to utilize the materials that we recycle, there are definite advantages to selecting an office supply or paper that has recycled content. Not only is the quality of today's recycled-content products equal to products made with virgin material, but they are competitive in price. Additionally, there are marketing benefits to using these products. The environmentally conscious consumer pays attention to labels that indicate a product contains recycled content; and a business that promotes its environmental concern gains a competitive edge.**

## Getting Started

The first step in buying recycled products is understanding the terminology. By understanding the difference, you can specify the kind of recycled product that you want. Be aware that “recycled” does not mean that a product contains 100% recovered materials.

- **Recycled** simply means that a product contains some recovered materials.
- **Recovered** materials is a broad term, covering both “preconsumer” and “postconsumer” materials.
- **Postconsumer** materials, like corrugated boxes, office paper, wood and scrap metal, have been used by consumers, separated from trash and collected in home or business recycling programs.
- **Preconsumer** materials are such things as trimmings, damaged or obsolete products and overruns that are generated by manufacturers.

The difference between “preconsumer” and “postconsumer” is whether or not the consumer has actually used the material. Purchasing products with postconsumer content helps to develop markets for recyclables collected from homes and businesses.

## Program Elements

Establishing a “buy recycled” program will take thought, time, education and support from senior management. Yet, many companies are proving that it is possible and cost-effective.

- Obtain management commitment to buy recycled products.
- Educate staff about recycled products (see list on back).
- Inform your suppliers that your company prefers to purchase supplies with recycled content.
- Evaluate and test recycled products.
- Revise specifications, policies and procedures.
- Establish goals and phase-in implementation.
- Promote the change internally and externally.

## Where To Get More Information

- The Resource Venture provides *free* information and assistance to help Seattle businesses set up a “buy recycled” program. Call us at (206) 389-7304 or visit our Web site at [www.resourceventure.org](http://www.resourceventure.org).
- King County's Environmental Purchasing Program Web pages located at [www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/](http://www.metrokc.gov/procure/green/).

**Paper Products**

Adhesive paper  
Bond and writing paper  
Book paper  
Boxes  
Carbonless paper  
Chipboard  
Coated papers  
Coated poster stock  
Computer paper  
Copy paper  
Cover stock  
Facial tissue  
Napkins  
Offset paper  
Paper towels  
Place mats  
Printing paper  
Text paper  
Thermal facsimile paper  
Tissue paper  
Toilet seat covers  
Uncoated poster stock

**Office Supplies and Products**

Appointment books  
Banker boxes  
Adding machine rolls  
Binders  
Bulletin boards  
Business card holders  
Business forms  
Calendars  
Clipboards  
Desk pads  
Disk mailers  
Double-pocket dividers  
Drawer organizers  
Easel pads  
Envelopes  
Facsimile transmittal memos  
File folders  
Filing guides  
Filler paper  
Hanging file folders  
Index cards  
Ink jet cartridges  
Inter-department envelopes  
Labels  
Legal pads  
Letter openers

Message holders  
Notepads  
Padded mailing bags  
Paper pads  
Pencil holders  
Pencils  
Pencil sharpeners  
Pens  
Perforated pads  
Pocket folders  
Portfolios  
Push pins  
Reinked printer ribbons  
Report covers  
Rulers  
Scissors  
Self-stick notes  
Stackable trays  
Stationery  
Steno pads  
Tape Dispensers  
Telephone message pads  
Toner cartridges  
Tyvek envelopes  
Writing pads

**Packaging Products**

Bubble wrap  
Food packaging containers  
Gift boxes  
Mailing bags  
Molded trays  
Packaging peanuts  
Pallets  
Paper bags  
Paper packing material  
Plastic bags  
Reels  
Shipping boxes  
Tissue  
Wrapping paper

**Automotive Products**

Antifreeze  
Basestock oil  
Engine oil  
Hydraulic oil  
Industrial oil  
Retread tires  
Truck trailer bumpers

**Landscape and Recreation Products**

Athletic surfaces  
Bicycle racks  
Fencing  
Floral containers, pots  
Geotextiles  
Landscaping lumber  
Park benches  
Picnic tables  
Playground equipment  
Tree grates

**Compost and Organic Materials**

Compost bins  
Fertilizer  
Hydromulch  
Mulch  
Soil amendments  
Top soil  
Yard debris compost

**Marine Products**

Fenders  
Pilings  
Marine floats

**Fuel Products**

Scrap tire fuel  
Scrap wood fuel  
Waste oil fuel

**Miscellaneous**

Animal bedding  
Art glass  
Blasting mats  
Bowls  
Construction materials  
Golf tee markers  
Laminated rubber  
Parking lot building materials  
Plates  
Protective bumpers  
Rain barrels  
Recycling containers  
Serving trays  
Storage containers  
Trash receptacles  
Utility bins  
Wheel chocks