

Why Buy Recycled-Content (RC) Paper at UC Berkeley?

“For recycling to work, everyone has to participate in each phase of the loop. From government and industry, to organizations, small businesses, and people at home, every American can make recycling a part of their daily routine. ... Some ways in which businesses, local governments, and citizens can get involved [include] ... buy[ing] recycled-content products.”

- EPA: *Municipal Solid Waste – Recycling*

“It is the intent of the Legislature to encourage the procurement of recycled paper products by the University of California.”

- *California Public Contract Code, Section 10507.5*

The California State Legislature has established guidelines for recycling within the state government and the legal system. This includes the requirement of 30% recycled paper content for high-speed copier paper, ... computer printout paper, ... and other uncoated printing and writing papers.

- *California Public Contract Code, Section 12160-12169*

Paper production is the third most energy-intensive of all manufacturing industries, using 11.5% of all energy in the industrial sector.

- *Dept. of Energy, Energy Information Associations Manufacturing Energy Consumption Survey 1998*

Recycling paper uses 60% less energy than manufacturing paper from virgin timber

- *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

Over a third of the waste sent to municipal landfills is paper where, among other impacts, it breaks down and produces methane, a powerful greenhouse gas.

- *The Alliance for Environmental Innovation with Business for Social Responsibility: Make That Recycled*

The Office of the Federal Environmental Executive's web-based paper calculator (<http://www.ofee.gov/recycled/cal-index.htm>) provides a method for determining the percentage reductions in resource consumption and pollution emissions when recycled-content (RC) paper is purchased instead of virgin paper. **Supposing that UC Berkeley uses 1,000,000 reams of paper every year, and that currently none of it is RC paper, we can calculate the impact of switching to 30% post-consumer RC paper.**

We would use:

- **30% less wood (2,000,000 lbs or 7,200 trees)**
- **13% less energy (5,000,000 BTU or 1,500 kWh)**
- **15% less water (3,000,000 gallons)**

We would generate:

- **11% less greenhouse gas emissions (630,000 lbs CO2 equivalent)**
- **7% less nitrogen oxide emissions (1,300 lbs)**
- **12% less particulate emissions (1,500 lbs)**
- **20% less volatile organic compound emissions (1,100 lbs)**
- **15% less solid waste (320,000 lbs)**

In the 2002-2003 fiscal year, Berkeley was **last** among all of the UC schools in terms in proportion of RC paper purchased. Only 9% of our paper purchases were RC paper, compared to 75% at UC Davis and 37% on average.

The other UCs have shown that purchasing more RC paper is a viable option. Please help us purchase more RC paper and reduce Berkeley's impact on the environment.

Why Should You Buy Recycled-Content Office Paper? (see other side)

Purchasing recycled-content paper is an essential part of recycling and “closing the loop.” In order for recycling itself to be effective, there has to be a market for recycled-content goods. In addition, purchasing recycled-content products dramatically reduces the consumption of natural resources.



How to Buy Recycled-Content (RC) Paper

- Ask for at least 30% post-consumer recycled content paper; all suppliers should carry RC paper of at least this amount. If the paper says 30% recycled content, make sure that it is post-consumer waste.

- Definitions to help you make an informed choice:

Post-consumer waste is paper that has been used by a consumer and then separated from the solid waste stream. This is the key term to look for when buying RC paper.

Pre-consumer waste is paper waste generated in the paper production process that never reaches the consumer. It is standard for industry to recycle this paper, but it can count toward the total RC content listed for RC paper.

Processed Chlorine Free (PCF) paper is bleached without chlorine or chlorine-derivates (which produce toxic, carcinogenic compounds such as dioxins), although it may include RC paper that was previously bleached with chlorine.

- ***Economical options available through Office Max:***

Boise Aspen Recycled (30% recycled content): P1054901, \$2.23/ream

Boise Aspen 100 (100% recycled content): P1054922, \$3.47/ream

Pricing

While 100% RC paper is often significantly more expensive than virgin paper, 30% RC paper is typically comparable to or only slightly more expensive than virgin paper.

For example, in the Office Max contract (see listing in bold above), the price of the standard virgin paper is \$2.01 / ream, while for 30% RC paper it is \$2.23 / ream, a 10 percent difference. Ten percent may seem like a lot, but for an annual paper budget of \$2000, it amounts to an extra cost of only \$200.

The price difference only reflects the current negotiated contract. Suppliers may be convinced to lower the prices of RC paper if they know it is a high priority for their customers.

Quality

RC paper is sometimes perceived as inferior to virgin paper, due to the poor quality of the earlier versions of RC paper (even from only 10 years ago). However, this is no longer the case. A 1999 study by the U.S. Government Printing Office, the U.S. Council of Mayors, and three equipment manufacturers (Canon, Hewlett-Packard and Lexmark) found that multipurpose **30% RC office paper performs equivalently to virgin paper:**

http://www.usmayors.org/USCM/uscm_projects_services/buy_recycled/30paper.pdf. A few 100% RC paper brands were also tested and found to perform equivalently. The list of brands tested by the GPO is posted here: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/qualitycontrol/cypaper.html>.

“But my RC paper jams sometimes...” Unfortunately, all paper occasionally causes printing jams. The above-mentioned study found that RC paper does not jam more frequently than virgin paper.

This information has been compiled by Students for a Greener Berkeley, a (primarily) graduate student group at UC-Berkeley working on environmental sustainability issues on the campus. For more information or other questions, please email greenerberkeley@gmail.com.