



**SF Environment**  
 Our home. Our city. Our planet.



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**2015 Annual Report: Buy Green Program for City Staff**

Approved by the San Francisco Commission on the Environment (COE)  
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 Prepared by San Francisco Department of the Environment (SFE)

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## I. Summary

Environmentally preferable or “green” products are less toxic, more energy efficient and made with higher levels of recycled or recyclable materials. By ordinance, City departments are required to purchase green products in certain product categories. The Department of the Environment (SFE) and Office of Contract Administration (OCA) lead the ordinance implementation. City staff can find out where to buy green products at [SFApproved.org](http://SFApproved.org).

Major activities and trends for calendar year 2015 include the following and are summarized in Table A.

- Out of a total of \$8 million dollars the City spent on computers, cleaning products, janitorial papers, lighting, and office supplies, 82% qualified as “green” products (according to sales reports from citywide contracted vendors).
- Looking only at product categories under contract in both years (computers, office supplies, lighting, and janitorial supplies), the percentage of green products purchased increased from 2014-2015, from 79% to 82%.
- Purchases of green computers, printers and servers increased from 82% to 83%.
- Purchases of green lighting ballasts increased from 44% to 78%.
- Purchases of 100% post-consumer waste recycled paper rose from 81% to 94%. However, the reporting process revealed that the products purchased in both years was “elemental chlorine free,” not “processed chlorine free,” which in previous years was the preferred City specification. SFE will work to improve this specification in the coming year.

## II. Introduction

### History and Mandate

San Francisco has been buying green since the 1980s, but purchasing requirements were scattered among several ordinances. In 1998, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors passed legislation launching the [Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Pilot Program](#), which:

- Inventoried and assessed hazardous chemical products bought by City departments
- Established environmental and health criteria
- Compared costs between green and conventional products
- Set priorities and field tested products with City departments

In 2003, San Francisco became the first city in the nation to adopt the [Precautionary Principle](#), a policy statement requiring City operations to select alternatives that present the least potential threat to human health and the City's natural systems, based on the best available science. In 2005, San Francisco enacted the [Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance](#) (Environment Code, Ch. 2). This ordinance applies the Precautionary Principle to City purchasing, and requires City departments to purchase only approved alternative (“required green”) products for certain priority product categories. This ordinance also consolidated green purchasing requirements from various sections of City code into a series of regulations under the umbrella of Chapter 2. [SFApproved.org](#) was created in 2010 to support implementation of this ordinance. This annual report to the Commission is required by the ordinance.

## How Green Product Specifications Are Developed

SFE works with City departments and OCA to develop green requirements for City commodity and service contracts. These requirements range from standards or ecolabels, such as Energy Star or Green Seal, to more detailed, independently developed technical specifications. In keeping with the Precautionary Principle, SFE seeks to take anticipatory action to prevent harm from certain products, to conduct assessments of safest alternatives available to fulfill the same product function, and to take a full-cost, life-cycle view of product costs and impacts.

The immediate goals for green products may be summarized as maximum performance, minimum impact, and lowest cost:

1. **Performance:** Does the product work well? Is it durable? Does it make efficient use of resources? SFE confers with individual City staff and/or established commodity-specific "Green Teams" to obtain information on product performance, in addition to OCA's surveys of City departments.
2. **Impact:** Does the product have unacceptable worker health, public health, or environmental impacts? SFE takes the lead role in assessing impacts on human health and the environment and developing purchasing requirements accordingly.
3. **Cost:** Is it cost-effective in its manufacturing, use and disposal (life cycle) compared to its alternatives? OCA is responsible for obtaining the best possible prices on City purchases.

Green products and specifications are listed on [SFApproved.org](http://SFApproved.org) in one of two ways:

1. **Required green products:** City staff are required to buy only these products. These products meet all goals above and can save money because they are almost always in City contracts.
2. **Suggested green products:** City staff are encouraged to try these products and rate them at SFApproved.org so they might be included in future contracts. These products meet San Francisco's environmental and health criteria. Some products may need more research on cost or performance.

## III. Green Product & Service Categories

To date, the Department of the Environment has created green specifications for the following product and service categories. All are available on SFApproved.org. Categories with asterisks (\*) are "required" categories, as defined above.

### Art Supplies

Barrier Creams  
Brush Cleaners  
Mediums and Gessos  
Paint (Artist)  
Solvents and Oils  
Varnishes

### Automotive

\*Parts Washers  
Shop Towel Services  
Spraying Equipment  
\*Vehicles

### Automotive Fluids

\*Fuel  
Hydraulic Fluid (Biobased)  
Motor/Engine Oil (Re-refined)

### Building Supplies & Services

Building Materials  
Flooring: Carpet  
Services: Moving  
\*Services: Pest Management in Buildings  
\*Wood

### Cleaners

\*Abrasive Cleaners  
\*Bathroom Cleaners  
\*Carpet Cleaners

### \*Cleaner Degreasers

Dish Soaps  
Disinfectants  
Drain Openers  
\*Floor Cleaners  
\*Floor Finishes and Strippers  
\*Furniture Polish  
\*General Purpose Cleaners  
\*Glass Cleaners  
Graffiti Control  
\*Hand Soaps  
Odor Control  
\*Toilet Cleaners (Acid)  
\*Toilet Cleaners (Non-acid)  
\*Toilet Deodorizers (Hangers, Pucks)

#### Cleaning Supplies

- \*Bags: Compostable Plastic
- \*Bags: Trash
- \*Hand Dryers: Electric
- Microfiber Cleaning Products
- \*Paper Towels
- \*Toilet Seat Covers
- \*Toilet Tissue

#### Electronics

- \*Appliances
- Audio Visual Equipment
- \*Computer Servers
- \*Computers & Monitors
- \*Copiers, Printers, Scanners, Fax Machines

#### Electronics Cleaners

- Keyboard Cleaners

#### Food, Catering Services

- \*Foodware
- \*Water Dispensers

#### Landscaping

- Fertilizers
- Hoses (Garden & Soaker)

#### Services

- Landscaping

#### Lighting

- \*Compact Fluorescent (CFL) Ballasts
- \*CFL Bulbs
- \*CFL Fixtures
- \*Exit Signs
- \*Fluorescent Ballasts
- \*Fluorescent Fixtures
- \*Fluorescent Tubes
- \*High Pressure Sodium (HPS) Bulbs
- \*LED Bulbs
- \*LED Desk Lamps
- \*LED Electronic Drivers (Power Supplies)
- \*LED Fixtures
- \*Metal Halide Bulbs

#### Lubricants

- Motor/Engine Oil (Re-refined)

#### Office Supplies

- Batteries
- \*Binders
- Correction Tape
- Furniture
- Markers: Permanent
- Markers: Whiteboard
- \*Paper
- \*Paper Products
- Services: Moving
- Toner Cartridges

#### Paints, Thinners & Coatings

- Paint (Traffic)
- \*Paints (Architectural)

#### Personal Care

- Hand Sanitizers

## IV. Accomplishments

### Awards

On May 23, 2016, San Francisco received the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT) Purchaser Award for buying EPEAT-registered computers and servers in 2015. EPEAT-registered products meet strict environmental criteria that address the full product lifecycle, from energy conservation and toxic materials to product longevity and end-of-life management. [EPEAT-registered products](#) offer a reduced environmental impact across their lifecycles.

### New Green Contracts and Products

In 2015, SFE and OCA worked on the following green contracts:

Citywide:

1. Industrial supplies
2. Office supplies

Departmental:

1. SFO industrial supplies
2. SFO upholstered chairs

SFE added new products to the following product categories on SFApproved.org:

[LED desk lamps](#)

[Upholstered furniture](#)

Janitorial papers:

1. [Paper Towels](#)
2. [Toilet Seat Covers](#)
3. [Toilet Tissue](#)

#### Cleaners:

1. [Abrasive Cleaners](#)
2. [Bathroom Cleaners](#)
3. [Carpet Cleaners](#)
4. [Cleaner Degreasers](#)
5. [Dish Soaps](#)
6. [Disinfectants](#)
7. [Drain Openers](#)
8. [Floor Cleaners](#)
9. [Floor Finishes and Strippers](#)
10. [Furniture Polish](#)
11. [General Purpose Cleaners](#)
12. [Glass Cleaners](#)
13. [Hand Soaps](#)
14. [Odor Control](#)
15. [Toilet Cleaners \(Acid\)](#)
16. [Toilet Cleaners \(Non-acid\)](#)
17. [Toilet Deodorizers \(Hangers, Pucks\)](#)

#### Outreach

SFE conducted the following outreach activities in 2015 to promote City green purchasing:

1. Met with city staff stakeholders 11 times, including extensive work with Public Works and Fire departments
2. Led a national webinar on San Francisco's disinfectants alternatives analysis for US Department of Energy
3. Promoted SFApproved to Green Cities California members (GCC), including a presentation at GCC's Los Angeles workshop
4. Presented on green purchasing to an OCA all-staff training.
5. Participated in the creation of:
  - a. The first international NSF sustainability standard for solar photovoltaics (e.g., panels) (ongoing).
  - b. Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council (SPLC) Chemical Playbook (ongoing)
  - c. Urban Sustainability Directors Network (USDN) Buy Green Playbook

#### Staff Working on Green Citywide Contracts

The following staff were involved with greening citywide contracts during 2015:

SFE: Chris Geiger, Jessian Choy, Julie Bryant, Soko Made.

OCA: Abby Fard, David Bui, Darlene Frohm, Deirdre Darley, Galen Leung, Gwen Williams, Hermilo Rodis, Jaci Fong, Ken Easton, Kofo Domingo, Nishil Bali.

## **V. Recommendations**

SFE analyzes vendor sales data each year to identify opportunities for improving Citywide green purchasing. While the City spent \$8.3 million on green products in 2015, at least \$1.8 million was still spent on non-green products in our “required” product categories. Clearly there is room for improvement. Below are SFE's recommendations, based on our sales data analyses and also on our meetings with 1,051 staff from 25 departments over the past five years:

### **Steer staff to buy green via customized online stores**

Customized online purchasing portals or “stores” can effectively increase green purchases in a way that requires no effort by the user. For example, SFE and OCA customized the City's office supplies online store so that City staff cannot see or buy prohibited products. SFE will continue to explore the potential for online stores in other product categories.

### **Incorporate green purchasing into the new Financial Systems Project**

While SFApproved.org provides comprehensive information on green products, and clearly denotes which ones are “Required”, the website does not allow staff to actually make a purchase. In recent years, City staff have repeatedly suggested that San Francisco – like numerous other jurisdictions across the country – should update its citywide purchasing software to more efficiently steer staff toward green products. This process is now underway via the City Financial Systems Project (F\$P). Ideally, the F\$P will clearly denote green products, hide prohibited products, and make required environmental specifications easily accessible to users. SFE staff are currently engaged with F\$P project staff to maximize the system's green purchasing functionality.

### **Improve the accuracy and availability of sales data for green products**

To date, SFE has been forced to rely on sales data submitted by city contracted vendors in order to measure the effectiveness of its green purchasing program. These data often include incorrect prices, product categories and names, departments, purchasers and green status. Quality control is expensive; collecting and correcting the 2015 vendor-supplied data required \$5,750 in consultant time and considerable staff time. Through its reporting functions, F\$P promises to eliminate our reliance on vendor-supplied sales data, and in the process save time and money. We are now working with the Controller's Office to ensure that F\$P meets its potential for sales reporting.

Until F\$P is fully implemented, SFE will work with OCA to identify ways to better incentivize quality data submissions from contracted vendors.

### **Work more closely with key City departments**

In the coming year, SFE plans to update the City's specifications for computer and other IT equipment, assist vendors in rolling out the green cleaning training program specified in the new janitorial cleaners contract, and work closely with at least two city departments to improve their green purchasing performance.

## VI. Table A. Summary of Green Purchases

TABLE A. Summary of City Purchases

		2014				2015				Notes & vendors that provided data	
		% Compliant	\$ Compliant products	\$ Limited use & prohibited products	\$ All products	Notes	% Compliant	\$ Compliant products	\$ Limited use & prohibited products		\$ All products
<b>Computers, Printers, Servers</b>	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	82%	\$ 2,830,342	\$ 634,658	\$ 3,465,000	Data from Enpointe and Xtech. Computerland didn't	83%	\$ 5,589,979	\$ 1,144,936	\$ 6,734,915	Data from Computerland, Enpointe & Xtech.
<b>Janitorial Cleaners</b>	Bath, Tub & Tile Cleaners					For 2014, there was not a full year of data available for janitorial cleaners and supplies, making comparisons invalid.	41%	\$ 4,352	\$ 6,378	\$ 10,730	SFE held four meetings with citywide custodial supervisors to tell them about the new cleaners contract that was awarded in 2015. SFE will continue to remind them to buy compliant cleaners, and help them get required trainings.  Data from Champion, Santora, Supplyworks (Clean Source), United, Waxie.
	Carpet Extraction Cleaners						34%	\$ 4,649	\$ 9,102	\$ 13,751	
	Degreasers						93%	\$ 73,629	\$ 5,784	\$ 79,413	
	Disinfectants						31%	\$ 22,840	\$ 50,828	\$ 73,668	
	Floor Cleaners, Strippers, Finishes						77%	\$ 2,859	\$ 841	\$ 3,700	
	Furniture Polishes						48%	\$ 12,991	\$ 13,973	\$ 26,964	
	General Purpose Cleaners						61%	\$ 19,656	\$ 12,426	\$ 32,082	
	Glass Cleaners						27%	\$ 993	\$ 2,688	\$ 3,680	
	Hand Soaps						27%	\$ 37,778	\$ 101,034	\$ 138,812	
	Toilet Deodorizers (Hangers, Pucks)						54%	\$ 2,717	\$ 2,353	\$ 5,070	
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>							47%	\$ 182,462	\$ 205,407	
<b>Janitorial Supplies</b>	Paper Towels					95%	\$ 423,281	\$ 23,364	\$ 446,645		
	Toilet Seat Covers					33%	\$ 12,054	\$ 23,955	\$ 36,009		
	Toilet Tissue					98%	\$ 1,188,818	\$ 24,662	\$ 1,213,480		
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>					96%	\$ 1,624,153	\$ 71,981	\$ 1,696,134		
<b>Lighting</b>	Bulbs/Tubes	53%	\$ 112,279	\$ 100,946	\$ 213,225	Data from Maltby and Omega. Data was not available from Regency.	38%	\$ 212,976	\$ 349,529	\$ 562,505	Prohibited LED fixtures bought: \$11,247 not EnergyStar or DesignLights Consortium Qualified. Limited Use Bulbs bought: \$112,323 HID HPS (cycling) up to 1000W; \$51,420 specialty incandescents. Data from Maltby, Omega, Regency.
	Ballasts	44%	\$ 26,694	\$ 34,246	\$ 60,940		78%	\$ 72,292	\$ 20,222	\$ 92,514.36	
	Fixtures	68%	\$ 34,178	\$ 15,827	\$ 50,005		14%	\$ 7,211.89	\$ 15,477	\$ 22,689	
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	53%	\$ 173,151	\$ 151,019	\$ 324,170		43%	\$ 292,480	\$ 385,228	\$ 677,708	
<b>Office Supplies</b>	Batteries (rechargeables AAA -D, 1.5-9 volt)	12%	\$ 3,043	\$ 21,691	\$ 24,734	Data from Staples.  Data on ink cartridges / toners was not received.	9%	\$ 2,027	\$ 19,674	\$ 19,674	96% of paper purchased was 100% PCW recycled and elemental chlorine-free (ECF), not processed chlorine-free (PCF), which is preferred. We did not receive data on ink cartridges / toners. Data from Staples.
	Bottled Water			\$ 801	\$ 801						
	Cleaners	97%	\$ 19,693	\$ 584	\$ 20,277		97%	\$ 19,693	\$ 584	\$ 20,277	
	Ink/Toner										
	Paper, 8.5"x 11" or 8.5" x 14", White 100% Post Consumer Waste (PCW)	81%	\$ 708,671	\$ 163,000	\$ 871,671		96%	\$ 654,167	\$ 27,257	\$ 681,424	
	<b>SUBTOTAL</b>	81%	\$ 731,407	\$ 186,076	\$ 917,483		94%	\$ 675,887	\$ 47,515	\$ 721,375	
<b>TOTAL</b>		79%	\$3,734,900	\$971,753	\$4,706,653		82%	\$8,364,962	\$1,855,066	\$10,218,001	