



SF Environment

Our home. Our city. Our planet.

A Department of the City and County of San Francisco



2017 Annual Buy Green Report for San Francisco City Departments

Prepared by the San Francisco Department of the Environment (SFE) Green Purchasing Program

Presented to the San Francisco Commission on the Environment (COE)

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I. Executive Summary

The Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Ordinance, also known as the Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance, requires the Department of the Environment (SFE) to report on the City's progress in green purchasing. The Green Purchasing Program's major accomplishments in 2017 include finalizing a new set of regulations and environmental specifications for carpet; developing environmental specifications for furniture; addressing implementation of environmental restrictions in the City's existing office supplies contract; and working with the Office of Contract Administration (OCA) and Controllers Office to incorporate green purchasing features into the City's new Financial Systems Project (FSP).

This report also provides an analysis of purchasing data for two product areas: information technology and office papers. In calendar year 2017, the overall percentage of green (compliant) IT products stood at 83%, the same level as in 2016. Percentage of compliant copy paper decreased slightly from 96% in 2016 to 91% in 2017.

Ongoing and new activities include continuing rollout of carpet and furniture specifications; a review of the City's green purchasing policies and program; development of updated information technology purchasing policies; organizing a green cleaning training of trainers; and rollout of new lighting requirements.

II. Background

History & Mandate

Environmentally preferable or "green" products are less toxic, more energy efficient and climate-friendly, and made with higher levels of recycled or recyclable materials than comparable alternative products. Under the Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance (Environment Code, Chapter 2), City departments are required to purchase green products and services in certain product categories, which can be viewed at SFApproved.org. SFE leads ordinance implementation, in collaboration with OCA and affected City departments. The ordinance requires this annual report to the Commission on the Environment.

How Green Product Specifications Are Developed

SFE works with City departments and OCA to develop green requirements for selected 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 Green Purchasing Program seeks to identify product criteria that satisfy three objectives:

- 1) Performance. Do compliant products work well? Are they durable and efficient?
- 2) Impact. Do the products have minimum worker health, public health, or environmental impacts?
- 3) Cost. Are compliant products cost-effective, including production, use and disposal phases? Cost issues are primarily addressed by OCA.

Green products and criteria are listed on [SFApproved.org](https://www.sfapproved.org) in one of two ways: "Required" and "Suggested." For a summary of SFApproved listings, see Table A.

Required green products: Under the Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance, City departments buying certain categories of products (see Table B) may only purchase products that meet Required specifications. Required products meet all three of the above goals - performance, impact, and cost - and are generally listed on citywide term contracts. There are currently 16 product categories that are "Required."

Suggested green products: For Suggested products, SFE has researched environmental specifications, but more work may be needed on cost and/or performance goals. City staff are encouraged to try suggested products and rate them at [SFApproved.org](https://www.sfapproved.org), to help determine which products should be included in future contracts. There are currently 63 "Suggested" products.

III. 2017 Major Projects and Accomplishments

New Carpet Regulation

In light of substantial waste and toxics issues associated with carpet and adhesives, SFE developed new purchasing requirements for these products. In 2017, SFE engaged a consultant, Jean Hansen from HDR, to survey eight major carpet manufacturers on a variety of environmental factors. SFE then engaged City stakeholders (architects, project managers, installers), along with manufacturers and third-party ecolabel certifiers, to finalize purchasing requirements. Staff spent significant time creating a list of compliant products.

San Francisco adopted these "Required" purchasing requirements in 2018 as a [regulation, which is among the strictest in the nation](#). The regulation applies to all City purchases and includes, among other requirements, a restriction on broadloom (rolled) carpet, a requirement for Cradle-to-Cradle Silver certification, a ban on many toxic chemicals, minimum recycled content requirements, and requirements

for fiber and dying.

New Furniture Specifications

In 2017, staff also created purchasing specifications for furniture. SFE surveyed major manufacturers, engaged City stakeholders, and researched the availability of compliant products – a complicated endeavor due to the diversity of product subcategories and complexity of components. The resulting “Suggested” purchasing criteria include requirements for certified textiles, restrictions on many toxic chemicals including flame retardants, antimicrobials and poly- and perfluorinated compounds, and requirements for Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood. These new criteria are available at SFApproved.org.

Green Contracts and Product Requirements

In addition to the products mentioned above, SFE and OCA worked on environmental requirements for the following contracts in 2017:

Citywide Contracts:

1. Foodware
2. Furniture
3. Industrial supplies
4. Janitorial supplies
5. Office supplies: Focused on addressing online shopping platform display of prohibited products and inaccurate green product claims.

Departmental Contracts:

1. SF Airport (SFO):
 - a. Upholstered chairs
 - b. Industrial supplies
 - i. Specialized industrial cleaners (e.g., graffiti removers)
 - ii. Material handling, storage and packaging
 - iii. Batteries and flashlights
 - iv. Paint, lubricants, sealants, accessories and supplies
 - v. Paints, latex (including recycled)
 - vi. Paints and coatings, specialty (e.g., floor coatings, heat-resistant coatings, spray paint, athletic field marking paints, dry fall coatings, stains, varnishes, zone-marking paints)
 - vii. Paint removers
 - viii. Adhesives
 - ix. Caulks and other sealants

- x. Industrial furniture
 - xi. Plastic products
- 2. SF Human Services Agency (HSA) ergonomic chairs
- 3. SF Juvenile Probation Department meat (antibiotic free)
- 4. SF Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA) task chairs and other furniture
- 5. SF Port Janitorial Services

Outreach and Training

SFE's Green Purchasing Program gave 12 presentations to more than 500 people in 2017 (Table B), in addition to many less formal meetings and phone consultations with City departments.

Exploration of Product Registries

For certain product categories - carpet, for example – SFE's purchasing specifications may be too complex to be applicable in some City purchasing efforts. In these cases, City staff need lists of compliant products. Creating such lists is generally the role of third-party certifiers. SFE engages with some third-party certifiers to improve their standards. However, if no such certifications exist, or if the existing certifications still do not meet the City's needs, SFE staff face the task of verifying product compliance themselves. This is very time-intensive and not sustainable in the long term, requiring extensive communications with manufacturers and sometimes independent laboratory tests for chemicals of concern. For this reason, SFE continues to engage with organizations that are developing centralized tools for vetting compliant products, also known as product registries. A viable product registry would be extremely useful for all organizations trying to buy green.

Financial Systems Project (FSP)

FSP is San Francisco's \$60M comprehensive, Citywide accounting, purchasing, and budgeting system that began rollout in July of 2017. Once complete, it is intended to record all purchasing transactions in a centralized database, with a wide variety of reporting options. SFE staff have worked with the FSP team for more than two years on ways to incorporate green purchasing processes seamlessly into the new system. SFE's long-term goals for FSP include the following:

1. Enable FSP users to easily see green products whenever they begin a purchasing transaction
2. Eliminate non-compliant products from FSP
3. Link FSP to SFAApproved.org listings of Required and Suggested environmental specifications
4. Enable automated, detailed reporting of green purchasing performance

There is now a feature in place on FSP for marking green products, but this awaits full implementation. FSP has not yet been able to incorporate other elements due to urgent, competing priorities at the City level. SFE staff continue working closely with the Controller's Office and OCA to ensure that FSP realizes its potential to improve green purchasing in the City, and to provide greater detail and reliability in sales data.

Awards

On May 9, 2017, San Francisco received a Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council Leadership Award for an "outstanding case study" on rechargeable batteries, entitled [Charging Ahead: How to Find Powerful Rechargeable Batteries that Go On...and On](#). This research, conducted with the Responsible Purchasing Network, reviewed rechargeable battery technology, identified the most important performance characteristics, and listed the highest performing consumer rechargeable batteries available. Since the report's publication, custodial supervisors with the Division of Real Estate have begun pilot testing the rechargeables in paper towel dispensers, and report that batteries now need to be recharged about half as often as those previously in use.

IV. 2017 Green Purchasing Metrics: Focus on IT and Paper Products

We measure progress in green purchasing by calculating the percentage of total dollars spent on compliant products within a particular product category. Each year, SFE strategically selects product categories to review based on OCA's schedule to initiate new Citywide contracts. This year, we focused on three product categories:

1. *Information technology products.* Laptops, desktops, and monitors must be EPEAT-Gold registered; certain computer servers must meet the latest Energy Star standards.
2. *Copy paper.* White, letter and legal sized copy papers must be 100% postconsumer waste recycled content and Elemental Chlorine Free, with Processed Chlorine Free preferred.
3. *Recycled file folders,* which must meet EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guideline (CPG) postconsumer recycled content requirement of 30% or higher.

Office paper and file folder purchases

As depicted in Figure 1 below, office paper product compliance in 2017 was 91%, which is an increase from 2013 (88%) and 2014 (81%) levels, but slightly lower than 2016 (96%). Office papers are now purchased from office supplies contracts, instead of through a separate Citywide term contract as in the past. The latest office supplies contract was awarded to Staples in 2017, with requirements that the vendor block all noncompliant products. There were significant delays in full implementation of

product blocking of noncompliant papers on Staples City web portal; this may account for the slight decrease to 91%. We are working with Staples to accomplish product blocking.

SFE also reviewed another commonly purchased product in the Staples contract – file folders, which are required to be 30+% postconsumer recycled content. Out of a total expenditure of \$97,674 on file folders, 50% were compliant in 2017. Again, delays in product blocking probably accounted for the noncompliant product purchases.

Information technology purchases

For information technology, all purchases are reviewed by Department of Technology and OCA before approval. This has resulted in fairly high compliance, compared to other product categories SFE has reviewed in the past. Compliance in 2017 was 83%, the same as in 2015 but higher than 2014 (82%) or 2013 (71%). SFE staff probed reasons for non-compliant purchases and learned from IT managers that desktop computers are easily customizable, but customization sometimes renders them non-compliant. SFE staff will use this feedback to refine the Citywide IT specifications.

The Departments of Building Inspection and Public Health purchased 100% compliant IT products in the highest dollar amounts out of all city departments. SFE thanks the below City staff for their commitment to green purchasing.



Public Health

\$114,938
(total purchases)

Carlos Hernandez	John Lam
Cory Pershing	Latrice Daye
Derek Johnston	Linda BURGESS (pictured)
Jorge Wong	Remy Doyle
Guillermo Gonzalez	
Hung Quach	



Building Inspection

\$173,533
(total purchases)

Joel Cusi (pictured)
Wilson Lo (pictured)

Figure 1: Quantity of Compliant Copy Paper Purchased by City Agencies

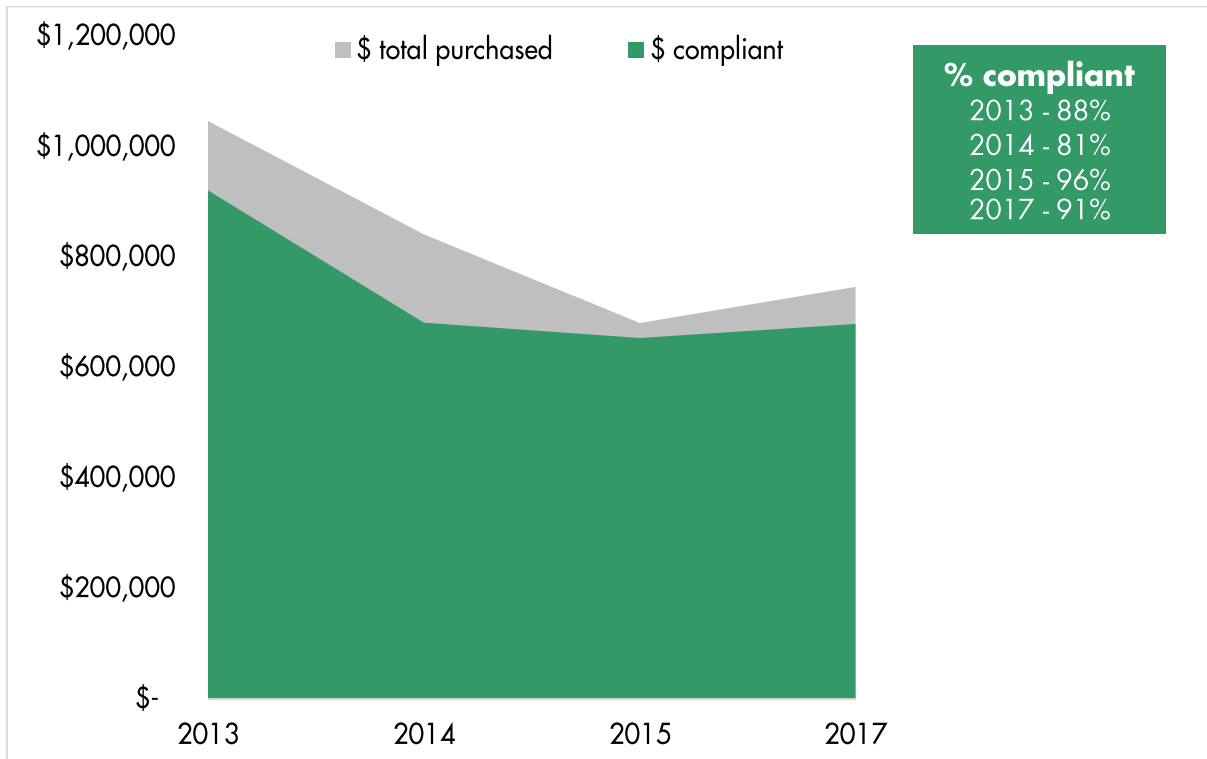
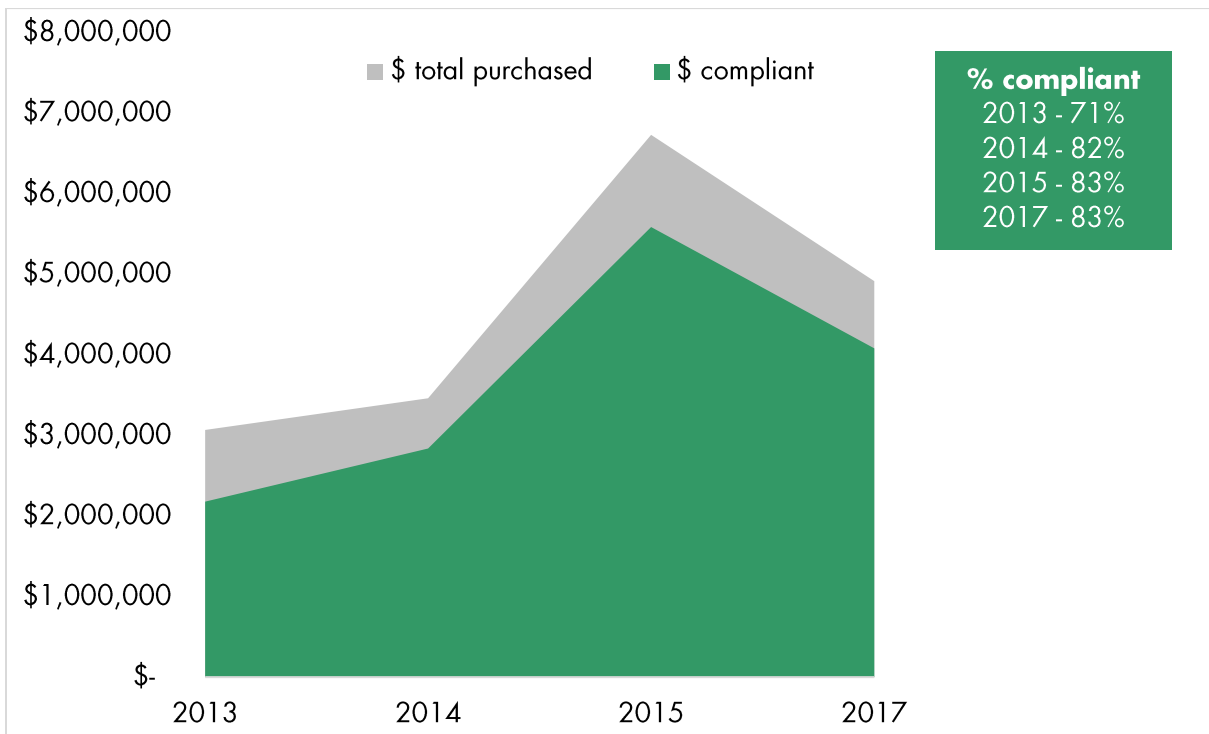


Figure 2: Quantity of Compliant IT Products Purchased by City Agencies



Data Sources

Historically, vendor-provided data has been difficult to obtain and sometimes incomplete and/or inaccurate. This year, IT data was provided by all three vendors: Enpointe, Computerland, and Xtech. Xtech failed to provide data in 2013. Computerland failed to provide data in 2014. Office supply data was provided by Staples. Quality checking the Staples data, and especially ensuring that prohibited products were correctly blocked in vendor catalogs, required many hours of SFE staff time.

V. Ongoing and Future Activities

Complete evaluation of Green Purchasing Program

In 2017, SF Environment tasked the Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN) with evaluating the City's green purchasing policy and program. Having recently developed a national-level "Sustainable Procurement Playbook for Cities," RPN was able to compare San Francisco's green purchasing program to the recommendations in the Playbook. RPN reviewed San Francisco's policies, staff roles and responsibilities, action planning processes, outreach activities, contracting procedures, and tracking and progress reporting.

RPN reviewed documents, metrics, and reports, and interviewed City purchasers and SFE staff. The report was completed in summer, 2018. Staff are now working internally and with other City departments to incorporate the report's findings into work plans.

Create new requirements for certain green building products

Until 2017, SFE's Green Purchasing Program had focused on the acquisition of commodities and services under Administrative Code, Chapter 21, as mandated by the Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance. With revisions to the Green Building Ordinance (Environment Code, Chapt. 7) passed in 2017, SFE began development of specifications for carpet and furniture. In 2018, SFE is working on specifications for other interior building products, beginning with paints.

Update information technology purchasing policies

In 2008, San Francisco became the first City in the nation to require that its computer purchases be registered as EPEAT-Gold. EPEAT is a registry of products meeting selected environmental leadership standards, and Gold represents its highest level of leadership. SFE has begun working with the

Committee on Information Technology (COIT) to update current IT purchasing requirements, and to expand them to new product categories such as imaging equipment and mobile phones.

VI. Opportunities for Expanding Green Purchasing

Staff have identified a number of key opportunities for improving the City's green purchasing performance. Most of these have been explored in detail in the recent program evaluation (see above), and will be incorporated to the greatest extent possible in future work plans.

Opportunities include:

1) Make purchasing green products easier. In the current City purchasing system, there is sometimes no convenient way to communicate green purchasing requirements – especially for departmental purchases. An easier option is to block noncompliant products on vendors' online shopping platforms. This approach has been implemented in office supplies contracts, and SFE will continue to explore the potential for online stores in other product categories. As mentioned above, there are also opportunities for better integrating green purchasing into the new FSP system.

2) Make identifying green products less time consuming. Institutional buyers typically have little time to research which products are compliant vs. noncompliant, and SFE's resources for this research are limited. Ensuring that citywide term contracts include only green products, making maximum use of third-party certifications (which typically maintain up-to-date lists of compliant products), and possibly working with product registries (see above) represent the best opportunities for improvement.

3) Improve communications with City staff. Training City staff on green purchasing requirements, and reminding them of these requirements at the time of purchase, pose significant challenges. A number of creative options have been proposed, such as citywide campaigns, one-page "easy" guides, and incorporating green purchasing topics into department manuals and onboarding events.

4) Hold vendors accountable for meeting contract requirements. Staff have encountered several instances of vendor noncompliance with contract requirements, usually involving failure to submit sales reports or failure to block certain products on vendor websites. There is also a general disincentive for vendors to refuse the sale of noncompliant products to City purchasers, even though contract language may require that they sell only compliant products. There is little enforcement of these contract provisions, for a variety of practical and legal reasons. SFE will continue to explore contract language and legal mechanisms to hold vendors more accountable for contract requirements.

5) Improve data on green purchasing. Despite good overall performance on 2017 green purchasing in papers and IT, the City still spent at least \$908,194 on non-green products. In addition, it is very likely that the City spent significantly more outside of Citywide contracts – and these purchases remain largely unquantified. Tracking green purchasing metrics more efficiently will require stronger incentives for vendor sales reporting, as well as making best use of FSP's reporting capabilities.

6) Build a culture of green purchasing among City departments. The Green Purchasing Program depends heavily on the collaboration of other departments. Increasing activities with product-oriented “Green Teams,” organizing an interdepartmental working group on green purchasing, awarding champions, and aiming for greater levels of buy-in by department directors would all help make green purchasing the default for City operations. SFE staff are now actively seeking more opportunities for departmental engagement.

VII. Table A. Summary of Product Categories Covered by SFApproved.org

Current 16 categories in which City staff are required to comply with the buy green ordinance:



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Use less, buy the right thing

Search

batteries, cleaners, LED lights



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Required products meet City requirements for environmental and health impacts, performance and cost. For product categories below, City departments must see links below for compliant products and criteria that products must meet:

Choose:



Required

- [Appliances](#)
- [Bags for trash or compost](#)
- Building supplies: [carpet](#)
- Cleaners ([bathroom](#), [carpet](#), [cleaner degreasers](#), [dish soap](#), [floor cleaners](#), [finishes and strippers](#), [furniture polish](#), [general purpose cleaners](#), [glass cleaners](#), [hand soap](#), toilet cleaners ([acid](#) and [non-acid](#)), [toilet deodorizers](#))
- [Computers](#) (desktops, monitors, laptops, netbooks) and [computer servers](#)
- [Copiers, printers, scanners, and fax machines](#) that are all-in-one
- [Foodware](#) and [paper bags](#)
- [Fuel](#) (biodiesel)
- [Hand sanitizers](#)
- Janitorial supplies ([toilet tissue](#), [paper towels](#), [toilet seat covers](#))
- [Landscaping services](#)
- [Lighting](#) (ballasts, fixtures and bulbs)
- Office supplies (e.g., [binders](#), [paper](#), [paper products](#))
- [Pest management services in buildings](#)
- [Water dispensers](#)
- [Wood](#)

All 79 categories:



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Search

batteries, cleaners, LED lights



[Advanced Search](#)

Art Supplies

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

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: Carpets & Adhesives
Furniture
Services for Pest Management in Buildings
Services: Moving
Wood

Cleaners

Abrasive Cleaners
Bathroom Cleaners
Carpet Cleaners
Cleaner Degreasers
Dish Soaps
Disinfectants
Drain Openers
Floor Cleaners
Floor Finishes & Strippers
Furniture Polish
General Purpose Cleaners
Glass Cleaners
Graffiti Control
Hand Soaps
Metal Cleaners
Odor Control
Oven Cleaners
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
Uninterruptible Power Supplies

Electronics Cleaners

Keyboard Cleaners

Food & Foodware

Bags: Paper
Bags: Reusable
Food, Drinks, Catering, Vending Machines
Foodware
Water: Dispensers & Small Bottles

Landscaping

Fertilizers
Landscaping Products
Services for Landscaping

Lighting

Compact Fluorescent (CFL) Ballasts
Compact Fluorescent (CFL) Bulbs
Compact Fluorescent (CFL) Fixtures
Exit Signs
Fluorescent Ballasts
Fluorescent Fixtures
Fluorescent Tubes
High Pressure Sodium (HPS) Bulbs
LED Bulbs
LED Desk & Floor Lamps (Portable Fixtures)
LED Electronic Drivers (Power Supplies)
LED Fixtures
LED Flashlights, Night Lights, Head Lamps
LED Under-Cabinet & Cove Fixtures
Metal Halide Bulbs

Lubricants

Motor/Engine Oil (Re-refined)

Office Supplies

Batteries
Binders
Correction Tape
Furniture
Markers: Permanent
Markers: Whiteboard
Paper Products
Paper: White, Copy
Services: Moving
Tape: Paper/Recyclable
Toner Cartridges

Paints, Thinners & Coatings

Paint (Traffic)
Paints (Architectural)

Personal Care

Hand Sanitizers

VIII. Table B. Outreach and Training

1/23/2017	City staff Prop Q/Delegated Purchasers Training to remind them to have City staff check SFApproved.org before making certain purchases.	SF	40, city staff
1/24/2017	Urban Sustainability Directors Network Green Purchasing Playbook	webinar	80, North America
2/2/2017	SF Sheriff department	SF	20, city staff
3/27/2017	SF lighting buyers & what they'd like in the next contract	SF	20, city staff
4/6/2017	SF demo for custodial supervisors from major City departments	SF	20, city staff
5/10/2017	Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council Summit	Denver, CO	50, international
6/27/2017	California Higher Education Sustainability Conference	Santa Barbara, CA	40, California-wide
7/10/2017	SF carpet stakeholders to finalize the regulation	SF	20, city staff & contractors
7/11/2017	SF custodians & supervisors from 10 City departments	SF	75, city staff
7/11/2017	SF custodians & supervisors from 10 City departments	SF	75, city staff
9/19/2017	Circular Economies Summit - VERGE Conference	Santa Clara, CA	12, nation-wide
12/5/2017	SF Prop Q/Delegated Purchasers Training	SF	40, city staff
12/5/2017	SF Prop Q/Delegated Purchasers Training	SF	40, city staff