



Staff that helped San Francisco Public Works buy 100% green janitorial cleaners:
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Photo by Rafael Ramirez

2018 Annual Buy Green Report for San Francisco City Departments

Prepared by the San Francisco Department of the Environment (SFE) Green Purchasing Program
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I. Executive Summary

Several San Francisco City ordinances, most notably the [Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Ordinance](#) (EPPO), require that City departments purchase only environmentally preferable or “green” products under certain circumstances. The EPPO requires that the San Francisco Department of the Environment (SFE) implement the ordinances’ mandates, which include filing this annual “Buy Green” report.

Major accomplishments of SFE’s Green Purchasing Program during calendar year 2018 include the enhancement of purchasing requirements and compliant product lists for carpet, furniture, paints, office supplies, and single-use foodware. Many of these requirements are among the strictest in the nation, particularly those that include the elimination of hazardous fluorinated chemicals. Additionally, SFE enlisted a national authority on green custodial practices to present the City’s first training-of-trainers on green cleaning and green cleaning products. This training included the development of online training modules aimed at custodial supervisors.

Sales reports show that the percentage of green janitorial cleaning products purchased increased from 47% in 2015 to 62% in 2018, while for janitorial papers (paper towels, toilet seat covers, toilet tissue) the percentage decreased from 96% in 2015 to 93% in 2018. In all, 85% of janitorial product purchases were green in 2018.

Ongoing and new green purchasing activities include further expansion of green furniture resources; revisions of the City’s purchasing criteria for information technology equipment; researching more efficient tools for identifying compliant products; implementing program improvements recommended by an independent consultant; and collaborating with the City’s Financial Systems Project (FSP) to integrate green purchasing into everyday procurement operations.

II. Background

History and mandate

Green products are less toxic, more energy efficient, more recyclable and/or compostable, have higher levels of recycled content, and have less impact on climate change than comparable alternative products. The EPPO, also known as the Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance (Environment Code, Chapter 2), was passed in 2005 and is the umbrella ordinance governing procurement of green products. The Green Building Ordinance (Env. Code, Chapter 7) extended green purchasing requirements to interior finishes of City construction projects, including furniture, carpets, and paints. SFE leads the implementation of these mandates through its Green Purchasing Program, in collaboration with OCA and other City departments. Information on environmental purchasing requirements is maintained on the [SFApproved.org](#) website.

How green product specifications are developed

SFE works with City departments and OCA to develop green requirements for targeted 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 Ordinance (Environment Code, Chapter 1), SFE seeks to prevent harm from certain products; conduct assessments of safest alternatives available to fulfill the same product function; and take a full-cost, life-cycle view of product costs and impacts.

The Green Purchasing Program seeks to identify product criteria that satisfy three goals:

- Performance. Do compliant products work well? Are they durable and efficient? (Primarily addressed by product users)
- Impact. Do the products minimize impacts on worker health, public health, and the environment?
- Cost. Are compliant products cost-effective, including production, use and disposal phases? (Primarily addressed by OCA)

SFE also educates City departments on green purchasing resources and mandates. The [SFApproved.org](#) website is the central repository of green products and purchasing criteria. Product categories are classified as either “Required” or “Suggested,” which are defined as follows:

✓ Required

For “Required” product categories, City staff may only purchase products that meet Required specifications (Table A). Listed products meet all three goals above and usually have discounts on citywide term contracts. There are currently 34 product categories that are Required. See Table A for a list of all Required categories.

✓ Suggested

City staff are encouraged to buy products that meet Suggested environmental specifications and rate them at SFApproved.org, to help determine which products should be included in future contracts. SFE has researched impacts of these products, but more work may be needed on cost and/or performance goals. There are currently 43 Suggested product categories. See Table B for a list of all product categories.

III. 2018 Major Accomplishments

Eliminating fluorinated chemicals

In collaboration with other institutional purchasers nationwide, SFE is working to restrict more than 4,700 Teflon-like chemicals (per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, or PFASs) that are commonly added to products for their non-stick, stain-, water-, and grease-resistant properties. [PFASs](#) are associated with obesity and cancer, are extremely persistent, and can sometimes migrate out of products into our food and bodies. A wide range of products contain these chemicals; thus far San Francisco has focused on foodware, carpet, and furniture.

Food Service Ware Ordinance

The Single-Use Foodware Plastics, Toxics, and Litter Reduction Ordinance amends Environment Code Chapter 16 by mandating the elimination of fluorinated chemicals from foodware products; requiring that single-use food service accessories be available only upon request or at self-service stations; and requiring reusable beverage cups at events on City property. The new ordinance’s definition of “compostable” prohibits the use of PFASs for compostable products starting in January 2020. Environmental specification language reflecting the ordinance amendments was incorporated into the current Disposable Food Containers, Utensils and Service Items Contract. SFE began researching compostable foodware to identify products that are PFAS-free, and posting them at [SFApproved.org/foodware](#).

Carpet Regulation

After almost two years of work, SFE adopted a carpet [regulation](#) that 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 and cushion-backed carpet tiles, a requirement for minimum recycled content and Cradle-to-Cradle Silver certification, and a ban on additional toxic chemicals including PFASs. SFE staff assembled lists of over 100 compliant carpet tile lines and eight compliant carpet adhesives, available at [SFApproved.org/flooring-carpets-adhesives](#). SFE also prepared carpet tile template specifications for easy inclusion in construction project manuals. San Francisco’s carpet regulation has received considerable attention from institutional purchasers nationwide and has been the focus of several webinars and conference sessions.

Furniture Specifications

SFE began researching environmental specifications for furniture in 2017. SFE engaged City stakeholders and surveyed major manufacturers for compliant products – a complicated task due to the many product subcategories and materials. The City’s “Suggested” furniture specifications prohibit many toxic chemicals and require Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified wood. SFE created a list of over 200 compliant furniture and textiles at [SFApproved.org/furniture](#) in a “green-greener-greenest” format. The base level of “green” reflects the City’s [2017 ordinance](#) banning toxic flame retardant chemicals in all upholstered furniture and certain children’s products sold in San Francisco. SFE is currently working with OCA to incorporate its specifications into City contracts.

Training of trainers for green cleaning

SFE regularly convenes “green teams” of City staff who are advised of green purchasing efforts in specific product categories. Convenings also support the department’s aim to build a network of department champions promoting these efforts. The Custodial Products Green Team has been meeting for over 13 years and has been instrumental in developing realistic contract requirements for janitorial cleaners and paper products. SFE hired Stephen Ashkin and Associates – a

prominent authority on “green cleaning,” – to create the City’s first training-of-trainers on the subject. Part of this effort involved creating a series of [Powerpoint modules](#) that can be employed by custodial supervisors in training their staff. Twenty-seven custodial supervisors completed the training-of-trainers and SFE is now following up with them to provide enhancements and multilingual versions of the materials.

Blocking noncompliant office supplies

SFE continued to work with the City’s office supplies vendor and OCA to ensure that thousands of noncompliant office supplies are blocked from the online office supply store used by City departments. Noncompliant products contain toxic ingredients or do not meet the City’s requirements for recycled content, or otherwise do not comply with existing green purchasing requirements. The current office supplies contract was put in place in August 2016 and was the City’s first effort to place the responsibility for blocking products on the contracted vendor.

Contracts

Throughout 2018, SFE staff worked with OCA staff to provide specifications and contract language for upcoming Citywide term contracts. In 2018, SFE staff worked on Citywide contracts for electrical supplies, furniture, janitorial supplies, lamps & ballasts, and office supplies. In addition, SFE staff worked with SFO on a Departmental foodware Request For Information and paint contract; with SFMTA on a paint contract; and with 49 South Van Ness Ave construction project on furniture specifications.

Presentations

In addition to working with OCA and individual departments, SFE delivers presentations to City staff to educate them about the Green Purchasing Program, EPPO requirements, and how to find compliant products through SFApproved.org. The Green Purchasing Program gave 16 presentations and trainings to 732 people in 2018, including two national events (see Table C).

IV. City Green Purchasing Trends: Janitorial Cleaners and Papers

Sales trends

The Green Purchasing Program’s primary performance metric is the percentage of green products purchased in each product category, calculated in dollars. Vendors are contractually required to submit sales reports that Green Purchasing staff analyze to measure success. This evaluation is time- and resource-intensive, and therefore SFE selects a subset of product categories to track each year, on a rotating basis. This year we focused on janitorial cleaners and papers. The trends are summarized in Figures 1 and 2.

The percentage of compliant, green janitorial products the City bought:

- Increased for cleaners, from 47% in 2015 to 62% in 2018—returning to 2013 levels.
- Decreased slightly for papers (paper towels, toilet seat covers, toilet tissue), from 96% in 2015 to 93% in 2018.

Overall, \$1,842,594 in green products and \$312,631 in prohibited products were purchased by the City, which means that the City bought 85% green janitorial products in 2018. Total expenditures for contracted vendors increased from \$1,338,936 in 2015 to \$2,155,567 in 2018.

The data reveal that certain kinds of green cleaning products were purchased in surprisingly small quantities; general purpose cleaners and glass cleaners, for example, accounted for only \$5,564 and \$2,749 in sales, respectively, although these should be commonly used products. This suggests that departments may be making significant purchases from other vendors that are not on the citywide contract. These purchases remain unquantified.

The Custodial Products Green Team was consulted on the reasons behind these trends. They cited four major factors:

- The selection of products available on the current citywide term contract is too narrow. New products, or newer versions of contracted products, are not available under the contract without a contract amendment. Team members requested a catalog-style contract in the future, with more variety available.

- It is easy to purchase via departmental purchasing authority instead of through citywide contracts. Any purchases under \$10,000 can be made independently, as long as they are through City-approved vendors. When product buyers habitually use departmental purchasing authority, they will not be directed to the pre-screened green products available on the citywide contracts.
- There was a change in ownership for a contracted vendor. This caused product name changes and confusion that may have reduced sales.
- There was a lack of product availability for some janitorial paper products. The only replacement products that fit existing dispensers had a lower recycled content and/or lacked certification of “processed chlorine free.”

Figure 1: Quantity of compliant cleaners purchased by the City

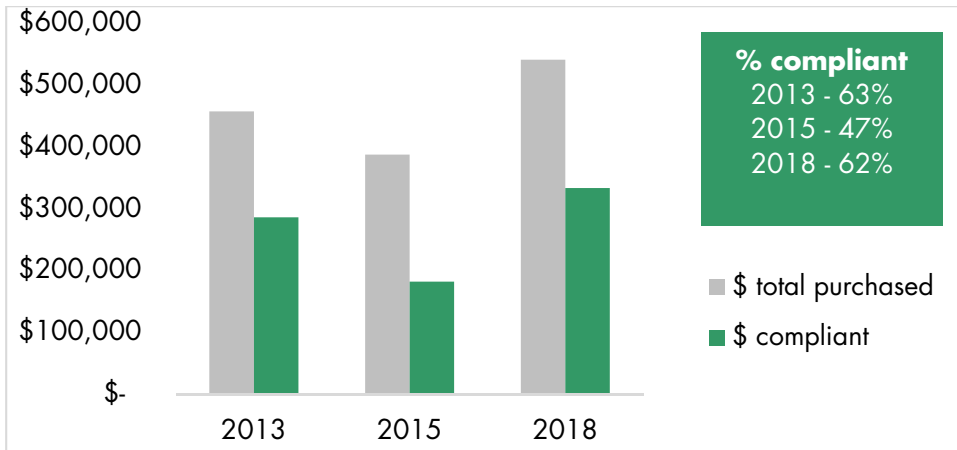
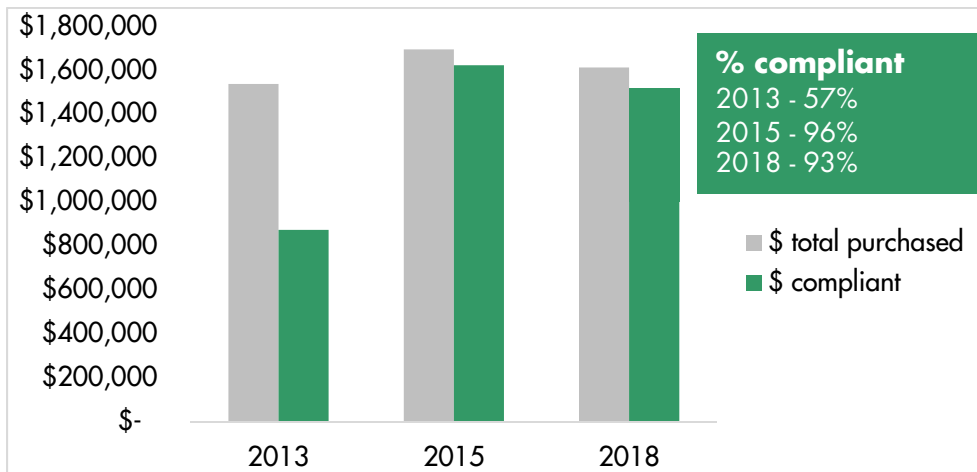


Figure 2: Quantity of compliant janitorial papers purchased by the City



Vendor compliance

There are currently four vendors listed on the Citywide contract for janitorial cleaners and paper, listed in the table below. Contract language requires these vendors to restrict sales of non-green products, and to submit sales data to the Department. However, as noted above, it is likely that additional janitorial products were purchased from other vendors that are City approved but not on the Citywide janitorial contracts.

Historically, vendor-provided data has been difficult to obtain and is sometimes incomplete and/or inaccurate. This year, data was provided by all four vendors.

City-contracted vendor	% green product sold	Total spend on janitorial products
Champion/Maintex	62%	\$174,364
*SupplyWorks	77%	\$656,754
United Labs	65%	\$243,422
Waxie Sanitary Supply	93%	\$1,080,999
Total	85%	\$2,155,540

City staff champions

We recognize and thank these staff at Public Works, who bought the highest percentage of green janitorial products in 2018:

Staff who purchased highest percentage of compliant cleaners	% green	\$ green & non-green by staff
John Lee	100%	\$ 76,969
Paul Blauvelt and Jerry Lehane	100%	\$ 4,459

V. Ongoing and Future Activities

Evaluation of the Green Purchasing Program

The Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN) was contracted to evaluate the City's green purchasing policy and program. RPN had previously created a "Sustainable Procurement Playbook for Cities" and was able to compare the City's green purchasing program to the recommendations in the Playbook. Along with structured interviews of City purchasers and SFE staff, RPN reviewed City policies, staff responsibilities, planning processes, outreach, contracting procedures, and tracking purchases. RPN provided a comprehensive list of recommendations for the Green Purchasing Program. SFE staff have begun implementing some of the recommended actions, such as the convening of an interdepartmental "City Sustainable Purchasing Committee," while continuing to evaluate the feasibility of others.

Green information technology policy

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 continued working with the SF Committee on Information Technology (COIT) in 2018 to update current IT purchasing requirements, introducing two new product categories: imaging equipment and large video displays. COIT adopted the new policy in January 2019.

Third-party tools to create compliant product lists

City staff must be able to identify products that are compliant with green purchasing requirements. As much as possible, SFE points to robust, green third-party certifications that maintain compliant product lists. SFE creates compliant product lists under very limited circumstances, namely when no green third-party certifications exist or when existing certifications are not stringent enough to meet our needs.

Creating product lists is time-intensive and not sustainable in the long term, requiring extensive communications with manufacturers and sometimes independent laboratory tests for chemicals of concern. SFE continues to explore the availability of online product registries that vet compliant products. SFE also engages with third-party certifications to better align their health and environmental standards with those of the City.

Financial Systems Project (FSP)

FSP is the City's comprehensive, citywide accounting, purchasing, and budgeting system that launched in 2018. SFE continues working with the Controller's Office to integrate green purchasing into FSP to the greatest extent possible.

Table A. Product Categories Deemed “Required”

Choose:

Required

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:**

Automotive Fluids

- [Fuel](#) (biodiesel)

Building supplies

- [Carpet](#)
- [Pest management services in buildings](#)
- [Wood](#)

Cleaning Supplies

- [Bags for waste](#)
- [Bags for compostables](#)

Cleaners

- [Bath cleaners](#)
- [Carpet cleaners](#)
- [Cleaner degreasers](#)
- [Dish soap](#)
- [Floor cleaners](#)
- [Floor finishes and strippers](#)
- [Furniture polish](#)
- [General purpose cleaners](#)
- [Glass cleaners](#)
- [Hand soap](#)
- Toilet cleaners: [acid](#) and [non-acid](#)
- [Toilet deodorizers](#)

Cleaning supplies

- [Paper towels](#)
- [Toilet seat covers](#)
- [Toilet tissue](#)

Electronics

- [Appliances](#)
- [Computers](#): desktops, laptops, monitors, tablets, thin clients, workstations
- [Computer servers](#)
- [Copiers, printers, scanners, and fax machines](#) that are all-in-one
- [Televisions & large digital displays](#)

Food & Foodware

- [Foodware and paper bags](#)
- [Water dispensers](#)

Landscaping

- [Landscaping services](#)

[Lighting](#) (ballasts, fixtures and bulbs)

Office supplies

- [Binders](#)
- [Paper](#)
- [Paper products](#)

Personal care

- [Hand sanitizers](#)

Table B. All Product Categories on SFApproved.org

All categories:

Art Supplies

Barrier Creams (Artist)
Brush Cleaners (Artist)
Mediums and Gessos (Artist)
Paints (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
Televisions & Large Digital Displays
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

Paints (Architectural)
Paints (Traffic)

Personal Care

Hand Sanitizers

Table C. 2018 Presentations

Date	Presenter	Event name or organizer	Attendance
1/23/2018	Jessian Choy	SFPUC Prop Q/Delegated Purchasers Training	40
1/30/2018	Jessian Choy	SFPUC Prop Q/Delegated Purchasers Training	40
4/18/2018	Jessian Choy	SFgov Carpet Reg meeting	33
5/15/2018	Jessian Choy	Sustainable Purchasing Leadership Council	15
5/22/2018	Jessian Choy, Chris Geiger	Presented at C2C carpet webinar	210
6/12/2018	Chris Geiger & Gordon Matassa	Green Purchasing Presentation	12
6/29/2018	Jessian Choy	Prop Q/Delegated Purchasers Trainings	100
7/16/2018	Chris Geiger & Gordon Matassa	Green Purchasing Presentation - DPW	6
7/17/2018	Jessian Choy	SF Delegated Purchasers Training	60
8/14/2018	Jessian Choy & Gordon Matassa	Green Purchasing Presentation - HSA	18
8/21/2018	Jessian Choy	SF Delegated Purchasers Training	40
9/18/2018	Jessian Choy	SF Delegated Purchasers Training	40
10/16/2018	Chris Geiger	Training of Trainers - green cleaning (with Ashkin)	28
10/16/2018	Jessian Choy	SF Delegated Purchasers Training	40
10/31/2018	Chris Geiger	Green IT Subject Matter Experts group	10
11/20/2018	Jessian Choy	SF Delegated Purchasers Training	40