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# ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE PURCHASING POLICY

## POLICY

St. Elizabeth Medical Center recognizes that its purchasing decisions can have an impact on the community and the environment and is, therefore, committed to purchasing products that minimize environmental impacts, toxics, pollution, and hazards to worker and community safety to the greatest extent practicable.

## PROCEDURE

### 1) PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on environmental factors to consider during selection and purchase of products and services for the Medical Center. The intent is to purchase in a manner that:

- Minimizes the quantity and toxicity of hazardous materials used at the Medical Center
- Minimizes the quantity and toxicity of wastes generated by the Medical Center
- Maximizes recycling efforts within the Medical Center and encourages recycling by vendors
- Conserves energy and natural resources

### 2) ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

BFR	Brominated flame retardants	EHSO	Environmental, Health & Safety Officer
CFC	Chlorinated fluorocarbons	EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
CFR	Chlorinated flame retardants	U.S.	United States
DOE	Department of Energy	VOC	Volatile organic compound

### 3) DEFINITIONS

*Environmentally Preferable Products and Services* - Products or services that have a lesser or reduced effect on human health and the environment when compared with competing products or services that serve the same purpose. This comparison may consider raw materials acquisition, production, manufacturing, packaging, distribution, reuse, operation, maintenance, or disposal of the product or service. [Definition taken from U.S Government Executive Order 12873]

### 4) PROCEDURE ELEMENTS

The following sections provide guidance on purchasing various types of products and services in an environmentally preferable manner. Note that the following conditions apply to all purchases:

- The health and safety of patients, visitors and staff is of utmost importance and takes precedence over all other considerations.
- Nothing contained in this policy shall be construed as requiring a department, purchaser or contractor to procure products that do not perform adequately for their intended use, exclude adequate competition, or are not available at a reasonable price and/or in a reasonable period of time.
- Nothing contained in this policy shall be construed as requiring a purchaser or contractor to take any action that is in conflict with local, state or federal requirements or other Medical Center policies.



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### 4.1. New Product Evaluation

As described in SPP105, *Product Management*, the Medical Center's Product Requisition Committee reviews requests for new products that involve multiple departments. The Environmental, Health & Safety Officer (EHSO) serves on this committee and performs reviews of new products from an environmental standpoint. The EHSO is also available to provide an environmental review of department-level product purchases and purchasers are encouraged to have this review performed.

### 4.2. Waste Prevention/Waste Minimization/Source Reduction

Waste generation and disposal is a part of the purchasing process that has a significant impact on the environment. Preventing and/or minimizing the quantity of waste generated should be considered during the purchase of goods and services in the following ways.

- Purchasers should consider short-term and long-term costs in comparing product alternatives, when feasible. This includes evaluation of total costs expected during the time a product is owned including, but not limited to, acquisition, extended warranties, operation, supplies, energy usage, maintenance, disposal costs, and expected lifetime compared to other alternatives.
- Products that are durable, long lasting, reusable, refillable, and returnable are preferred whenever feasible.
- Packaging that is reusable or currently recyclable by SEMC (e.g. cardboard) is preferred.
- SEMC should request that vendors use the minimum amount of packaging necessary for product protection, to the greatest extent practicable.
- Vendors should be encouraged to take back and reuse pallets and packaging materials, when feasible.
- Purchasers should consider whether or not vendors take back equipment for reuse, trade-in or environmentally safe recycling.
- Remanufactured products should be purchased whenever practicable, but without reducing safety, quality or effectiveness.
- When appropriate to do so, chemical products should be ordered in concentrated form, since this generally results in less packaging waste.
- Products should be ordered at frequencies and in quantities that minimize the number of deliveries that are required by the vendor, as feasible.
- Vendors should be encouraged to provide documentation, such as Material Safety Data Sheets and catalogs, electronically rather than by hard copy, when possible and appropriate, to minimize generation of paper waste.

### 4.3. Energy and Natural Resource Usage

The amount of energy and natural resources (e.g. water, fossil fuels) used by products and services should be considered during purchasing in the following ways:

- Water-saving products (e.g. shower heads, toilets) should be purchased whenever practicable with preference given to those that have the U.S. EPA WaterSense® label. A full listing of U.S. EPA WaterSense® products is available on the U.S. EPA's web site.
- Where applicable, energy-efficient equipment should be purchased with the most up-to-date energy efficiency functions.
- All products purchased for which the U. S. EPA Energy Star® certification is available should meet Energy Star® certification, when practicable. Energy Star® is a joint program of the U.S. EPA and the U.S. DOE designed to help save money and protect the environment through energy efficient products and



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practices. A full listing of Energy Star® products can be found at the Energy Star® web site. Energy Star® product categories include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

- Appliances
- Heating & Cooling (furnaces, air conditioners, thermostats, etc.)
- Building Envelope (windows, doors, roofing, insulation, etc.)
- Electronics (televisions, phones, etc.)
- Office Equipment (computers, fax machines, etc.)
- Lighting (bulbs, fixtures, etc.)
- Commercial Food Services (dishwashers, fryers, ice machines, etc.)
- Other Commercial Products (Exit signs, vending machines, LED lighting, etc.)

When Energy Star® labels are not available, energy-efficient products that are in the upper 25% of energy efficiency as designated by the Federal Energy Management Program or Green Seal™-certified products should be chosen, when possible.

### **4.4. Computers and Electronics Purchasing**

When purchasing desktop computers, notebook computers, or monitors, the Green Electronics Council Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT™) should be used to assist the purchaser. The Council evaluates computing equipment on various criteria that measure a product's efficiency and sustainability attributes. EPEAT evaluates electronic products according to three tiers of environmental performance – Bronze, Silver and Gold. Computer purchasers should purchase EPEAT™ qualified equipment when feasible, based on cost and performance, and should give preference to higher rated products (e.g. gold over silver and bronze, silver over bronze) when other factors are equal or similar.

### **4.5. Vehicle Purchasing**

When purchasing any type of vehicle or mobile engine-powered equipment, various environmental attributes should be considered including, but not limited to, the following:

- Size of vehicle/equipment needed
- Size and fuel efficiency of engine
- Emissions from operation
- Alternative fuel options (electric, hybrid, etc.)
- Hazardous materials

The EPA Green Vehicle Guide provides information on fuel efficiency and emissions and should be consulted when making a vehicle purchase.

### **4.6. Toxic and Hazardous Material Minimization**

The quantity and toxicity of hazardous materials brought into the Medical Center should be minimized to the extent practicable during purchasing in the following ways:

- Green Seal™-certified cleaning products should be purchased for all applications where these types of cleaners are practical. For other cleaners (e.g. disinfectants), the least hazardous effective cleaner should be purchased, as practicable.
- Mercury-containing equipment and chemicals (e.g. pharmaceuticals, cleaners, lab chemicals) should not be purchased, unless equivalent, appropriate non-mercury alternatives are not available. When it



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is necessary to buy items containing mercury (e.g. fluorescent lamps), products with lower mercury levels should be given preference, when practicable. Refer to ECP023, Mercury Minimization Plan.

- Plastic medical products and devices purchased for use in patient care should be PVC-free and DEHP-free, when feasible and economically practicable. A list of non-PVC/DEHP alternatives to medical equipment that historically contains these materials is available on the Healthcare Without Harm web site.
- All equipment and supplies that patients may be exposed to should be latex-free, whenever practicable.
- Products containing flame retardants should be free of brominated flame retardants (BFRs) and chlorinated flame retardants (CFRs), when practicable. Products historically containing these materials include fabrics (e.g. mattresses, upholstered furniture, drapery, carpet foam) and electronics hardware (e.g. computers, televisions, copiers, scanners, telephones).
- Flooring, carpeting, adhesives, paints, coatings and related products should contain no formaldehyde, if possible and no or minimal VOCs. Preference should be given to Green Seal™-certified paints and coatings, when practicable.
- Pesticide contractors should only be used for pest control as a last resort when non-pesticide pest management practices (good sanitation and water management practices, structure maintenance, trapping, etc.) are unsuccessful. When pesticide usage is deemed necessary, only pesticides with current EPA registrations will be used and the quantity used will be minimized as much as possible, to effectively perform the job. Pesticides shall be applied by certified applicators, as required. Pesticide application contractors shall submit information to the Medical Center on the type(s) of pesticides being applied, prior to use.
- Products containing or constructed with heavy metals such as lead, cadmium, chromium and other metals that are hazardous wastes when disposed should be avoided when possible.
- New cooling and refrigeration equipment should be free of chlorinated fluorocarbons (CFCs), when feasible.

### 4.7. Buying Products With Recycled Content

Manufacturing new products from recovered materials saves resources, energy, and water, while reducing air pollution and disposal costs. A key component in the recycling process is the purchase of products made with recycled materials. For recycling to truly be effective, there must be a market for products made from items that are recycled. To encourage recycling, SEMC purchasers should try to identify products made wholly or partially of recycled materials during the purchasing process and preference should be given to products with the highest percentage of “post-consumer” recycled content, when other factors are equal or similar. “Post-consumer” refers to items that have been used by the consumer, separated for recycling, and then made into new materials and products. The terms “pre-consumer,” “recovered,” and “post-industrial” content refer to scrap collected and reintroduced into the manufacturing process without consumer use. This process is common in industry and many industries have begun referring to their scrap recovery as “recycled content,” because of the demand for “recycled” products. Purchasers should give preference to items with “post-consumer” recycled content because it creates a market for those items that are recycled at work and at home.

### 4.8. Contracts and Bids

Environmental issues should be considered and factored into requests for proposal for goods and services put out for bid. Key environmental attributes of the purchase should be identified and reviewed to determine the environmentally preferable requirements for that good/service. The EHSO is available as a resource for



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purchasers in identifying the environmental attributes associated with the purchases. Wherever possible and economically feasible, procurement specifications should provide for consideration of environmental characteristics such as: durable products, reusable products, energy efficient products, low pollution products, products (including those used in services) that contain the maximum level of post-consumer waste and/or recyclable content, and products that provide minimal impact to the environment. Sample language for purchasing documents and guidance on developing bids for environmentally preferable purchasing can be found in the New York City Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy and the U.S. EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Web Site (links in Section 5).

### 5) REFERENCES

SPP105, Product Management

[U.S. EPA WaterSense](#)

[EnergyStar](#)

[Healthcare Without Harm](#)

[Green Electronics Council Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool \(EPEAT\)](#)

[New York City Environmentally Preferable Purchasing policy](#)

[U.S. EPA Environmentally Preferable Purchasing](#)

[U.S. EPA Green Vehicle Guide](#)

SPP022, Purchasing

### 6) RECORDS

Recordkeeping shall be in accordance with SPP022, *Purchasing*.

### 7) AUTHORIZING DOCUMENT

Quality/Environmental Manual

APPROVED BY: Sr. M. Johanna DeLelys  
C.E.O.

4/29/09  
Date

APPROVED BY: Tom Corp  
Environmental, Health & Safety Officer

4/28/09  
Date