

Green Purchasing Tips



“Environmentally Preferred Purchasing”

Purchases occur every day and are a simple but powerful way to impact the environment. Green purchasing, also known as “Environmentally Preferred Purchasing (EPP)”, is the purchase of products or services that have a better human health or environmental impact when compared with competing products or services.

Qualities of a “EPP” product include:

- *Positive environmental attributes*

- Certified environmental

- Contain recycled content

- [Energy efficient](#)

- Water efficient

- Less toxic, in use (low VOC, No –CFC, Freon, mercury, lead)

- Less toxic when made (chlorine free paper processing)

- Biodegradable

- Easy to upgrade/update

- Wood certified as Sustainable or locally harvested urban waste wood



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- Generates less waste or less toxic waste*

- Packaging (uses less, or reusable or environmental materials)

- More durable (low maintenance, longer life)

- Economical to repair

- Salvaged (from deconstructed buildings, restores)

- Reusable

- Recyclable locally

- Returned to the supplier for recycling

- Condensed liquid (requires less storage space and packaging)

- *Companies -Give preference to companies that:*

- Reclaim or take back items such as batteries, electronics, or carpeting at the end of the product's useful life. “Closed loop” contracts require suppliers to pick up the used product – waste oils, tires, and toner cartridges for disposal.

- Have environmental credentials or environmental management systems or participate in a government pollution prevention program.

- Report on environmental actions - Does their website provide a sustainability report or information on their environmental actions?

Product Lists

In recent years, “green” product claims have exploded in numbers. There are different types of claims to being “green”; such as ‘natural’, which has no standard or certification behind them, ‘organic’ and ‘energy star’ that must meet a standard but are not always verified, and others are ‘certified’. *Certification programs operated by the manufacturer are good but are the lowest quality of certification programs.* Below are resources that identify certified products. (Certification programs are marked with **.)

[Consumer Reports “Eco-Labels”](#)

Consumer Reports ‘Eco-labels’ website explains many of the green labels. It lists products across several categories, including electronics, appliances, home & garden, autos, and food with “green ratings” provided for many products.

**[Cradle to Cradle Certification](#)

Neatly laid out and explained in detail by the MBCD are the five categories for certification.

**[Energy Star](#)

A list of energy-efficient computers, monitors, printers, air conditioners, dishwashers, refrigerators, other appliances and buildings that are cheaper to operate and consume less energy.

**[Green Seal](#)

An independent organization that certifies and promotes green products and services.

**[Green Guard](#)

An independent organization that certifies and promotes green products.

**[Green Spec](#)

Building related products certified as effective and green can be sorted by CSI division, water, energy, etc.

**[Scientific Certification Systems](#)

An independent certifier of the food industry, forest management, marine habitats, and others.

**[USDA Organic](#)

As of 2002, this government seal identifies food either organically grown or made from organic ingredients.

**[Wood Certification Programs](#)

[Forest Stewardship Council](#)

[Sustainable Forestry Initiative](#)

These programs verify that the forest which is the source of the wood products is managed sustainably.

[EPA Guidance](#)

The database of products includes contract language and standards.

[EPA Recycled Content](#)

EPA’s CPG (comprehensive procurement guidelines) is focused on recycled content. The fact sheets include content descriptions and offers specs and additional resources.





Consumer Resources

One way to achieve the goal of “green” purchasing is to give preference to companies that have environmental management systems or participate in environmental programs. Michigan has certified “green” homes, parks, golf courses (turfgrass), lodging, marinas, and more. Visit [Recreational Stewardship](#) and [Green Building](#) for companies that exhibit “green” practices.

[Conscious Consumer Marketplace](#)

The New American Dream website provides a wide variety of purchasing information.

[Consumer Consequences](#)

Interactive game- What resources are needed if everyone lived as we do? Change conditions and see the impact.

[Green Guide](#)

National Geographic’s Green Guide rates home and personal products and has everyday tips.

[Green Lodging](#)

This site provides a list of green lodging sites to stay at while traveling Michigan.

[Household Products](#) – are yours hazardous?

The National Institute of Health database provides hazard information on common household products.

[Toxic Town](#)

Toxic town is an interactive game-like screen that demonstrates where toxics can be found. Once identified, avoid products with these toxics.

[DigitalTips](#)

Your ultimate green guide to consumer electronics. A guide on how to reduce, recycle, reuse, and rethink electronics.

[Waste Prevention for Schools](#)

Teachers, listen up. Here is a great start to educate your students on waste prevention. Specific curriculum pertaining to waste prevention is only a click away.

[Sustainable Products](#)

This lists products and links to several certification programs.





Business and Government Resources

The quickest means to have a great environmental impact is by using products or suppliers with environmental credentials. These environmental websites below that can help you decide products and services are healthier for the environment. Also refer to the product resources noted earlier.

MDEQ P2 Partner [Clean Corporate Citizens](#)

The C₃ program is an accreditation from the DEQ that gives notice to the companies environmental stewardship and a strong environmental ethic in their operations in Michigan. Participants receive public recognition and are entitled certain benefits.

MDEQ P2 Partner [Michigan Business Pollution Prevention Partnerships](#)

Search engine to find other P2 certified companies that sell environmentally friendly products.

EPA's [Green Power Partnership](#)

The Green Power Partnership program supports the organizational procurement of green power by offering expert advice, technical support, tools and resources.

[EPA Guidance](#)

This includes a list of approved materials for all federal agencies. The database includes green contract language and standards.

MDEQ [The Green Industry Guide to Environmental Purchasing](#)

This document discusses the impact every product purchased from electronics to lighting, has on the environment. Solutions and changes are given.

MDEQ [Practicing Green Health](#)

Provides easy steps for health centers to managing and reduce waste.

[Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Guide](#)

EPA's guide to finding the best environmentally preferred product. The environment, the price, and the performance helped EPA to judge the environmental impact business and government products have.

[Toxic Product Alternatives](#) (INFORM)

This identifies safer alternatives to products containing persistent, bioaccumulative toxic chemicals (PBTs) such as mercury, lead, and dioxins.

[U.S. Small Business Administration](#) (SBA)

Brings insight on how small businesses can innovate and change in the future.



[GSA](#)

Provides facilities, supplies, equipment, and tools for corporate agencies and small businesses.

[Green2Green](#)

Ability to make comparisons between green building products based on characteristics, environmental attributes, and performance.

[Sustainable Business Forums](#)

Available on the MDEQ sustainable site is a chance for businesses all over Michigan to participate in an open forum. If you have any questions, need advice, or want to talk to sustainable businesses, check this out. You do not have to be a sustainable business to participate in the forums.

Green Purchasing (P2) Resources	
INFORM	http://informinc.org/summaries_waste.php
Responsible Purchasing	www.responsiblepurchasing.org
The Natural Step	www.naturalstep.org
World Watch Institute	www.worldwatch.org/program-areas
Ash Utilization Options Project	www.semircd.org/ash/education/resources.php
Great Lakes Renewable Energy Association	http://glrea.org/
Michigan Energy Options	www.urbanoptions.org

Listing of these websites does not imply any endorsement by MDEQ.

For more information contact the Environmental Assistance Center at 1-800-662-9278

