



Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines

Why is Adams County talking about sustainable purchasing?

The County is committed to its vision of being “the most innovative and inclusive county in America for all families and businesses”, and to leading the way for our community through County operations. The Sustainable Adams County 2030 plan sets the stage for the County to tackle issues such as energy efficiency and renewable energy, waste reduction, water quality and conservation, transportation, and food access.

The products and services purchased by Adams County have inherent social, human health, environmental and economic impacts throughout their life cycle, from the resources used to manufacture and transport them, to how they are disposed of at the end of their useful life.

By understanding and taking responsibility for the full life cycle impacts of goods and services, we have an opportunity to reduce risk, minimize adverse social and environmental impacts, and contribute to the goals and vision adopted in the Sustainable Adams County 2030 Plan.

These guidelines are intended to help Adams County staff understand sustainable purchasing best practices and make informed decisions that can help reduce our organizational footprint. The guidelines can be applied to all types of County purchasing. While all employees are encouraged to follow these best practice principles, compliance is voluntary and not intended to mandate purchase of any product or service that does not meet performance or budget requirements.

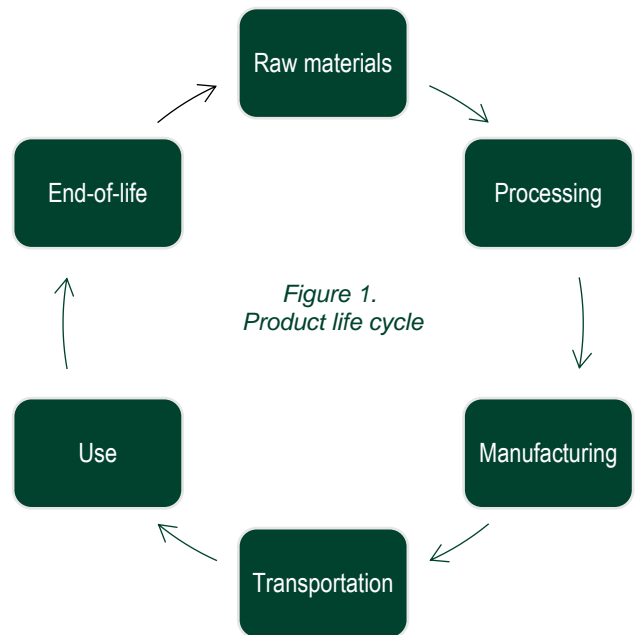
The guidelines are divided into two sections:

1. Sustainable Purchasing Best Practices

Overarching considerations for purchasing more sustainable goods and services.

2. Specific Product Recommendations and Third-Party Certifications

Specific recommendations and third-party label standards that can be used to simplify sustainable purchasing decisions.



Sustainable Purchasing Best Practices

This section of the Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines outlines overarching considerations for purchasing goods and services.

ENERGY AND WATER CONSUMPTION

- A. Invest in efficient products, services and technologies that save energy and water compared to standard models. Specify minimum performance standards or required certifications in procurement specifications where applicable.
- B. Use sustainable, climate-appropriate landscape management practices including stormwater control, drip irrigation, drought resistant landscaping, and local mulch and compost products.

FUEL CONSUMPTION

- A. Invest in fuel-efficient fleet vehicles and equipment following an “electric first” policy that considers total cost of ownership.
- B. Install electric charging stations where appropriate to supply fleet vehicles and equipment and provide options for employee and public charging.
- C. Where possible, specify fuel-efficient and low-carbon transportation, distribution, and delivery services.

NATURAL RESOURCES

- A. Specify and purchase paper, plastics, metals, asphalt, and concrete with the highest available percentage of post-consumer recycled content that meets product specifications.
- B. Avoid the use of virgin wood products when recycled/reclaimed alternatives are available and utilize sustainably sourced wood for county-owned building and landscape projects.

WASTE GENERATION

- A. Minimize waste generation by specifying and purchasing goods that are reusable, refillable and readily recyclable, including packaging, electronics, and office supplies.
- B. Explore options for product reuse or purchase used goods before purchasing new, e.g., furniture.
- C. Avoid the purchase of bottled water and single-use items such as plates and silverware.
- D. Specify and purchase durable, reusable products whenever feasible.
- E. Ask vendors about take-back programs for products such as shipping pallets, packaging materials, and electronic equipment.
- F. Do not purchase polystyrene goods and request alternatives to polystyrene for packaging and shipping.

TOXICITY AND POLLUTANT RELEASES

- A. Specify and use interior finishes, cleaning, pest management, and maintenance products that meet third-party standards for low-toxicity and low-emitting products.
- B. Use prevention and physical, mechanical, and biological pest-control methods whenever possible.
- C. Avoid exterior materials containing zinc, copper, arsenic, or other materials that can contaminate stormwater and are toxic to aquatic life.
- D. Use vegetable-based oil, food-grade oil, and other environmentally comparable vehicle/equipment oil products where available.
- E. Use biodegradable hydraulic fluids.
- F. Avoid the use of aerosol cleaning products and canned air products.

SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

- A. Seek out vendors with sustainability practices and values aligned with those of Adams County.
- B. Prioritize vendors that pay employees a fair wage and independent or minority suppliers and service providers.

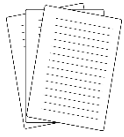
TOTAL COST OF OWNERSHIP

- A. Consider the life cycle financial and environmental cost (first purchase, operation, disposal), rather than purchase price alone, in procurement decisions, e.g., through scopes of work and use of third-party certifications.
- B. Prioritize the purchase of products that are durable and repairable, while still meeting performance requirement.

Specific Product Recommendations and Third-Party Certifications

County staff are encouraged to specify minimum standards and/or independent, third-party certifications when creating scopes of work for the following goods and services:

Paper



Comply with [EPA guidelines](#) for post-consumer recycled content of paper products.



Food Service Items



A. [Biodegradable Products Institute](#) certified compostable products (when commercial composting is available)

- The only third-party verification that certifies products will break down during commercial composting processes.



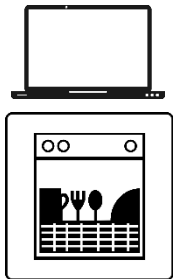
B. [USDA BioPreferred Program](#)

- Biobased products derived from raw materials such as plants and other renewable agricultural, marine and forestry materials.



C. Items accepted by recycling vendors and local programs.

Electronic Equipment & Appliances



A. [ENERGY STAR](#)

- Joint program of the US Department of Energy and US Environmental Protection Agency certifying energy efficient products such as light fixtures, appliances and office equipment.



B. [Electronic Products Environmental Assessment Tool \(EPEAT\)](#)

- Certification of green electronic equipment such as computers, monitors and laptops.
- Require Bronze certification at minimum for new electronic equipment purchases.

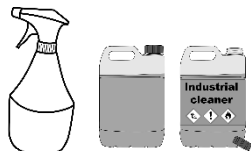


C. [Water Sense](#)

- EPA certification for water-efficient products that perform as well or better than less efficient counterparts and are 20% more efficient than average products.



Chemicals



A. [Safer Choice](#)

- EPA certification program of cleaning and other products that do not contain high toxic ingredients regardless of percentage in the formulation.



B. [Green Seal](#)

- Global nonprofit certifying products that meet climate, water, health and waste standards.
- Certification categories include cleaning products, paints, food service items, sanitary paper products and services such as commercial cleaning services.



C. [Greenguard](#)

- Certification for products that impact indoor air quality including flooring, paints, furniture and cleaning products.



D. No persistent bio accumulative toxins (PBTs), carcinogens, chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), toxins to aquatic life, chlorine, volatile organic compounds (VOCs), lead, mercury, cadmium

Wood Products

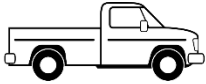


Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certification or higher

- Certified lumber and other building products made with sustainably harvested wood or that reduce wood consumption



Vehicles



When purchasing new vehicles, take an “electric first” approach by:

- Right-sizing purchases
 - Consider whether a like-for-like replacement is necessary/sufficient and adjust specifications to reflect anticipated performance requirements.
- Conduct market research to determine whether there is an electric alternative that meets performance requirements.
 - If yes include fuel savings and reduced maintenance costs of electric vehicles in cost-benefit analysis and purchase an electric vehicle when feasible.
 - If no, consider hybrid or efficient models and purchase most efficient vehicle that meets performance and budget requirements.

Construction & Major Remodels

Reference Sustainable Design Guidelines

Other Multi-Product Certifications

These criteria can be used in place of or in addition to the above criteria, or for products not otherwise described above:

A. EcoLogo

- Products certified for reduced life cycle environmental impact
- Wide variety of criteria and materials



B. Cradle to Cradle

- Global standard for products that are safe, circular and responsibly made



C. BCorp

- Global certification for businesses meeting social, environmental and governance best practice standards.

