

LCRA's Environmental Purchasing Program

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy

The purchase and use of products and services can have a profound impact on the environment. The Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) recognizes the positive impact that it can make on the environment through the purchasing decisions that its employees make. It is the intent of LCRA to integrate environmental considerations into every aspect of acquisition. The integration of these factors will result in economic, health, and environmental gains that will further LCRA's goals. The LCRA is committed to an environmentally preferable purchasing policy.

Overall Statement of Policy

- LCRA personnel should seek to reduce the environmental damages associated with their purchases by increasing their acquisition of environmentally preferable products and services to the extent feasible, consistent with price, performance, availability, and safety considerations.
- Environmental factors should be taken into account as early as possible in the acquisition planning and decision-making process.
- Responsibility for environmentally preferable purchasing should be shared among the program, acquisition, and procurement personnel.
- Environmentally preferable purchasing represents one important component of LCRA's commitment to pollution prevention.

LCRA is committed to the following:

- Increasing the acquisition of environmentally preferable products and services.
- Identifying and implementing pilot projects to test the best ways to incorporate environmental preferability into acquisition.
- Establishing incentive and award programs to recognize those people, teams, and work groups who are most successful at promoting the purchase of environmentally preferable products.

Supporting Information

What is Environmentally Preferable Purchasing?

Environmental preferable purchasing refers to buying products and 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. Also called "Affirmative Procurement," "Environmental Purchasing," and "Green Purchasing," this approach integrates environmental factors into procurement policies, usually using the following tools and/or methods:

- **Pollution Prevention:** From the start of a process or procedure, reducing or eliminating toxicity, air and water emissions.
- **Life-Cycle Perspective:** Looking beyond purchase price. Consider costs and environmental impacts over the lifetime of a product or service (manufacturing, packaging, transport, energy consumption, maintenance, and disposal).
- **Natural Resource Protection:** Giving preference to sustainable, reusable content, and recycled materials over virgin materials, as well as to conserving water and energy.

Guiding Principles

Five guiding principles can be used to provide broad guidance for applying environmental purchasing. They are:

- 1. Environment + Price + Performance = Environmentally Preferable Purchasing**
Environmental considerations should become part of normal purchasing practice, consistent with such traditional factors as product safety, price, performance and availability.
- 2. Pollution Prevention**
Consideration of environmental preferability should begin early in the acquisition process and be rooted in the ethic of pollution prevention, which strives to eliminate or reduce, up-front, potential risks to human health and the environment.
- 3. Life Cycle Perspective/Multiple Attributes**
A product or service's environmental preferability is a function of multiple attributes from a life cycle perspective. LCRA should strive to purchase products or services with as few negative environmental impacts in as many life cycle stages as possible. Life cycle stages include raw material acquisition, manufacture, packaging and distribution, use and disposal. Environmental preferability should reflect the consideration of multiple environmental attributes such as:
 - Energy Efficiency
 - Reduced Toxicity
 - Recycled Content
 - Recyclability

- Water Efficiency
- Resource Conservation
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Waste Prevention
- Renewable Material Percentages
- Adverse Effects to Workers, Animals, Plants, Air, Water, and Soil
- Reduced impacts on fragile ecosystems
- Toxic Material Content
- Packaging
- Transportation

4. Comparison of Environmental Impacts.

Determining environmental preferability may involve comparing environmental impacts. In comparing environmental impacts LCRA should consider: the reversibility and geographic scale of the environmental impacts, the degree of difference among competing products or services, and the overriding importance of protecting human health.

5. Environmental Performance Information

Comprehensive, accurate and meaningful information about the environmental performance of products or services is necessary in order to determine environmental preferability.