

What you need to know about...

# Recycled paper

## What it is

**R**ECYCLED PAPER HAS no universally accepted standard and can be a mix of so-called virgin fibres – taken from original forest growth – with material collected from consumer “blue boxes” known as post-consumer recycled (PCR) paper. Content of recycled fibres in paper can be as little as 10 percent and range to 100 percent of recycled material often collected from blue boxes.

“Fine paper,” which includes printing and writing paper, generally covers the bulk of paper products purchased by departments.

## Applications

Recycled paper offers the greatest potential for reducing landfill material while stimulating the market for recovered paper and improved energy savings. A minimum content of recycled material is not currently specified in the federal Environmental Choice guideline for printing and writing paper. Instead, the guidelines have been modified to reflect processes that reduce stress on the environment – to reduce materials and energy consumption, and reduce the impact on the environment during manufacturing by implementing a chlorine-free or chlorine-reduced bleaching process, for example.

## Who buys “green”?

The Canadian federal government has no across-the-board procurement requirement for recycled paper. However, the *de facto* North American standard for recycled paper emanates from the United States. The US federal green procurement executive order, effective January 1, 2003, is applicable to all US federal government departments and requires a minimum 30 percent content of PCR material. All US states follow a similar policy with differing degrees of success.

Guidelines for environmental purchasing still vary widely in Canada. One of the strongest programs emerged in Ontario nearly 15 years ago following an initiative by Metropolitan Toronto – Governments Incorporating Procurement Policies to Eliminate Refuse (GIPPER). Today the 40-member committee (members come from municipalities, school boards, hospitals and Ontario provincial ministries) continues to develop guidelines and initiatives across the province to both recycle and buy products (not only paper) containing recycled material.

A similar national program, the Association of Canadian Cities for Environmentally Sustainable Strategies (ACCESS), has been formed with an estimated 20 members.

Recycled paper procurement is illustrated in recent purchases by the cities of Toronto and Vancouver. Toronto notes that the bulk of paper requirements are dual-purpose bond photocopy paper containing up to 100 percent recycled content, which can range from 10-100 percent depending on the availability of pre-consumer material at the mill.



Vancouver, which recently accepted bids for recycled stock, noted a 10 percent price premium over standard paper. A public memo on the recommended purchase also said the recycled paper had caused problems when run through older [office] and print shop equipment. And it said the use of recycled paper could increase as newer equipment is gradually purchased, but at an additional cost.

Kevin Gallagher, vice president of Ottawa-based TerraChoice Environmental Services Inc., says recycled paper products introduced several decades ago may have caused problems, but should no longer be a serious problem. TerraChoice administers the federal government's Environmental Choice program, which was established in 1988.

## Paper manufacturers

The major paper manufacturers in Canada, which also have recycling mills, include:

- Domtar Inc.
- Coast Paper
- Stora Enso
- Bowater Inc.
- Norske Canada
- Cascades Fine Papers
- Abitibi Consolidated
- Kruger Paper Co.
- Tembec Paper Group

The Canadian Pulp and Paper Association (CPPA) and the Paper and Paperboard Packaging Environmental Council under the umbrella organization Paper Recycling Mills in Canada also publishes a detailed guide of 59 recycling mills in the country.

## Help for buying paper

Market Initiatives is a British Columbia based, non-profit private organization dedicated to protecting original forests and promoting the use of the highest possible content of recycled material in paper products, whose website ([www.oldgrowthfree.com](http://www.oldgrowthfree.com)) lists several detailed databases of paper suppliers.

The Alternative Suppliers Database also lists sellers of construction material, plastics and other recycled products.

The EcoPaper Database is a detailed Excel® spreadsheet in two parts that lists paper products from coated (glossy, magazine-style) paper to writing paper and envelopes with brand names, colours, paper makers, distributors, and contact information.

Environmental Choice ([www.environmentalchoice.com](http://www.environmentalchoice.com), 1-800-478-0399) is Environment Canada's guide to identifying manufacturers and suppliers of environmentally-preferred products and services.

A copy of a *GIPPER's Guide to Environmental Purchasing* (third edition, October 2002) can be found at [www.environmentalchoice.com/gipper.pdf](http://www.environmentalchoice.com/gipper.pdf). It covers all products from paints and paper to office equipment and asphalt. ♫

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