



## **Global Health & Safety Initiative – Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Guidance Document for Health Care**

What we buy matters. By selectively choosing the products health care purchases we can generate demand for inherently safer products and services for patients, workers, and the environment. The Global Health & Safety Initiative (GHSI) Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) Guidance Document outlines the fundamental definitions, priorities and practices that advance the development and implementation of EPP in health care.

GHSI defines EPP as the act of purchasing products and services that are inherently safer to human and environmental health. We prefer environmentally preferable products and services that address environmental impacts throughout the lifecycle. Specifically these products and services:

- Use **greener chemicals**, chemicals that are inherently less hazardous and release little to no toxic by-products across their lifecycle.
- Promote the use of **renewable materials** by increasing the use of sustainable, bio-based materials and reducing the use of fossil fuel-based materials.
- Support **healthy food systems** by sourcing local, seasonal, nutritious and sustainably produced food products.
- Enhance **land stewardship** by cultivating healthy ecosystems and protecting natural resources.
- Promote **sustainable energy** by using renewable energy sources and reducing energy use.
- Protect **clean air** by emitting little or no pollutants.
- Increase the availability of **clean water** by minimizing water use, water pollution, and bottled water products.
- **Minimize waste** by implementing the three “Rs”: reduce, reuse and recycle.
- Use **environmentally sound waste disposal** technologies where reuse, reduction and recycling cannot be achieved.

We believe that purchasing is an effective area for improving the environmental performance of health care and environmentally responsible purchasing helps hospitals:

- Significantly lessen their impact on the environment.
- Reduce capital and operating costs, including those due to lower overhead, avoided waste disposal, pollution abatement, decreased liability and lower potential occupational injury costs.
- Contribute to a healthier environment for patients and health care workers through reduced exposure to hazardous substances.
- Create a culture of quality performance through increased environmental awareness.

We prefer products that both address GHSI environmental priorities and meet performance and cost goals. Additional product research will be performed as needed for products with competing environmental benefits.



In addition, the GHSI guidance document is designed to:

- **Encourage manufacturers and suppliers** to reduce the environmental and health impacts of their products and services across their lifecycle.
- **Establish a model** for successfully purchasing environmentally preferable products and services, thereby encouraging other purchasers in our community to adopt similar goals.
- **Serve as a tool** for educating staff and setting goals against which to track environmentally preferable purchasing performance.
- **Create safer and healthier environments** for our patients, healthcare workers and local and global communities.

The Global Health & Safety Initiative supports the implementation of EPP in health care by creating and making available to healthcare purchasing stakeholders, materials, tools and resources necessary for effortless EPP, including:

- **A best practice resource** site that compiles case studies and successful EPP actions in health care, government and business.
- **Model environmental performance questions** for health care organizations to use with vendors.
- **The EPP Specifications Resource** – an online database that facilitates the development of environmental specifications for purchasers.
- **High priority products list** that identifies products and services for which environmentally preferable alternatives are of highest priority.

We, the undersigned organizations, recognize our commitment to help positively change the health care industry’s environmental footprint. We invite all health care purchasing decision-makers, purchasers, providers, suppliers and manufacturers to invest in the research, design, production, purchase and use of environmentally safer products, to challenge our business strategies, and to adopt sustainable initiatives that will significantly contribute to the health of patients, health care workers, communities and the environment.

Endorsers as of May 2009:

