

What is EPP?

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) is the concept of purchasing products or 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.

These products may meet some or all of the following criteria:

- ◆ Made from recycled content
- ◆ Easily recyclable
- ◆ Supplier has environmentally responsible management and operation practices
- ◆ Limited or no packaging
- ◆ Reusable
- ◆ Non-toxic
- ◆ Energy-efficient
- ◆ Safer for workers, patients, and the environment

EPP also means assessing your needs before purchasing any products; if you do not really need it or can limit the quantity (especially if the product is toxic), rethink purchasing it at all.

Why Change Your Practices?

By altering your facility's existing purchasing practices you can:

- ◆ Improve the ability of your facility to meet its existing environmental goals
- ◆ Improve worker safety and health
- ◆ Reduce liabilities
- ◆ Reduce health and disposal costs
- ◆ Reduce harmful impacts on the environment
- ◆ Gain recognition as a leader in pollution prevention

For More Information

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Web Resources

Practice Greenhealth

www.practicegreenhealth.org/topics/environmentally-preferable-purchasing

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

www.deq.idaho.gov/hospitals-assistance

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

www.epa.gov/oppt/epp/index.htm



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Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Guide (EPP)

for Healthcare
Facilities and Clinics



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Environmental Quality
www.deq.idaho.gov



10-Step Guide to EPP

1. Commit to EPP

Commit to eliminating the use of products or services that have negative impacts on human or environmental health unless no reasonable alternatives are available or the alternatives would compromise patient care. If purchasing non-EPP products and services is necessary, commit to reducing the amount purchased wherever possible.

2. Communicate the Commitment

To successfully implement EPP, all staff must be aware of the commitment the facility has made to change its purchasing practices AND how these changes will benefit workers, patients, and environmental health.

3. Create a Team

Form a group of hospital or clinic staff from different areas within the facility who can successfully prioritize and implement the use of green products and are eager to do so.

4. Conduct an Audit

Collect baseline green purchasing data including the current percentage of services and products that meet some or all of EPP criteria and the percentage of those that do not. Identify opportunities for purchasing and implementing green products or services.

5. Set Goals

Set goals for your facility that address existing environmental or health problems (e.g. reduce purchasing of mercury-containing medical equipment). Establish goals that can be measured.

6. Collaborate

Allow department and staff members to provide input on changes in products or services, especially those who will be using them on a daily basis.

7. Develop Policies and Procedures

Establish written policies requiring staff to purchase in compliance with the facility's EPP criteria.

8. Train Staff

Train staff on the new policies and procedures and establish a contact person or team for questions that may arise. If new products or services seem complicated, ask the vendor to provide training. Provide opportunities on a periodic basis to train new staff members.

9. Track Progress

Measure positive environmental impacts associated with new green products or services (e.g. reductions in energy, solid waste, hazardous waste etc.). Monitor progress by comparing data with the baseline data collected in step four.

10. Expand Efforts and Celebrate Successes!

Always look for new ways to improve and expand EPP goals and update EPP policies. Share your successes with facility staff, patients, and administrators and inform the local media.

Examples of EPP Products

- ◆ Fluorescent light bulbs
- ◆ Microfiber mops
- ◆ Red biohazard bags made from recycled material
- ◆ Reusable sharps containers
- ◆ Recycled paper products and other office supplies
- ◆ Reusable totes (instead of cardboard boxes)
- ◆ Non-mercury containing medical equipment
 - Digital thermometers
 - Aneroid or electric sphygmomanometers
 - Gastrointestinal tubes

You Can Be Influential

Suppliers value your business. If they do not carry EPP products or services, ask them to start offering them. More than likely they will do so to keep your business.

For example, many suppliers will deliver supplies in plastic totes instead of cardboard boxes and will gladly pick them up for reuse during the next delivery.

Suppliers may also be able to recycle your mercury-containing medical equipment. Be sure to ask!