



**SF Environment**

**Our home. Our city. Our planet.**



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**Annual Report**  
**Implementation of San Francisco's**  
**Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance - 2007**  
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San Francisco Department of the Environment  
Presented to the Commission on the Environment, City & County of San Francisco  
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## **I. Introduction**

### **A. Executive Summary**

The San Francisco Department of the Environment (SFE) and the Office of Contract Administration (OCA) have taken lead roles in implementing the City's Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance. Since the ordinance was passed in 2005, SFE has worked to institute environmentally preferable specifications for 15 product types in 10 citywide commodities contracts. Purchases of green cleaning products have increased from less than 1% to 55% of all City purchases in this product category, purchases of janitorial papers have increased to 89%, and purchases of office papers stands at 93%. Major accomplishments for 2007 include completion of the 12 SF Approved Product lists, new contract awards for janitorial cleaners, janitorial papers, janitorial supplies, and compostable food containers, development of draft environment specifications and language for the new citywide Information Technology Store contract, an experimental effort to enlist City vendors in providing green product sales data, and active participation in national standards development for cleaning products and compact fluorescent lamps. Future activities include work on at least two new contract areas—computers and lamps fixtures—plus continued work on improving existing specifications and user buy-in.

### **B. Mandate**

The Precautionary Purchasing Ordinance (SF Environment Code Chapter 2) establishes goals and procedures for environmentally preferable purchasing (green purchasing) by City departments. This ordinance was groundbreaking in its application of the Precautionary Principle (Environment Code, Chapter 1), and in its mandate that purchasers for the city may *only* buy commodities from "approved alternative product lists" for certain products.

The City & County of San Francisco did not begin its green purchasing efforts with the 2005 Ordinance. The Department of the Environment has been informally inserting environmental specifications into citywide term contracts for over ten years, especially related to recycled content of

products. The 2005 Ordinance succeeded the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Ordinance (passed in 1999), which established an ambitious, three-year pilot program in the City. The pilot program researched chemical products purchased by the City, prioritized the products based on potential environmental or health risks and sales volume, identified alternative products, and field tested the alternative products with City staff. It concluded that environmentally preferable products were available for 13 of the 14 product types identified, that 83% of preferable products tested met the majority of City staff performance requirements, and that a citywide green purchasing program was feasible.

The 2005 Ordinance mandates an annual review and report on its implementation not later than 24 months after the effective date of the ordinance (July 17, 2005), with annual reports thereafter in February. This report is submitted in fulfillment of that requirement.

Specifically, Section 203(g) requires:

- (i) an evaluation of the progress in meeting the goals in Section 201;
- (ii) the status and effectiveness of current efforts by City departments to implement this Chapter and additional specific actions, including legislation, needed to effectively implement this Chapter;
- (iii) a summary of the annual reports submitted by City departments pursuant to section 205(b) and a list of waivers granted by the Purchaser during the previous period organized by department.
- (iv) an update on the extent and efficacy of training programs for users and purchasers of Targeted Products;
- (v) a workplan for the next reporting period with specific goals, actions and timelines necessary to implement this Chapter; and
- (vi) The annual report required by this section shall include a recommendation by the Director, after consultation with City Departments and the public, on how to expand this Chapter to City contractors.

### **C. Report Scope**

In its description of program activities, this report covers the calendar year 2007. However, since the first report required under the ordinance was presented in July, 2007, we have avoided duplicating that effort here, and given web links for reference instead. The July, 2007 report can be found at: <http://www.sfenvironment.org/downloads/library/pporeviewjuly0507.pdf>

## **II. Activities and Accomplishments, 2007**

The Green Purchasing Program currently covers 15 product types in 11 Citywide commodities contracts. Out of the ten "[targeted product categories](#)" identified in 2006, SFE has worked on six. We currently maintain 11 "SF Approved" product lists. Some of these lists consist of simple purchasing criteria instead of specific products. Detailed summaries of the contracts were presented in the July, 2007 report, and may be found at: <http://www.sfenvironment.org/downloads/library/pporeviewjuly0507.pdf>

Four SFE Toxics Reduction and Zero Waste Program staff currently work on green purchasing-related activities on a regular basis. SFE staff from other programs are also consulted from time to

time. The total SFE time commitment to green purchasing activities currently totals to approximately 1.5 staff positions. At this level of staffing, the program has been unable to address many priority product categories, and outreach about the program has been limited. The establishment of a new green purchasing position at OCA—expected by Fall, 2008—is therefore expected to greatly benefit the program.

**Table 1. Summary of product categories being addressed by the San Francisco Green Purchasing Program**

<b>Product area</b>	<b>On SF contract?</b>	<b>SF Approved List?</b>
Arsenic-treated wood	YES	YES
Batteries	YES	YES
Biodiesel fuels	YES	YES
Computer equipment	NO	YES
Disposable food service ware	YES	YES
Food	NO	NO
Janitorial cleaning products	YES	YES
Janitorial papers	YES	YES
Janitorial supplies	YES	YES
Lamps and ballasts	YES	YES
Multifunction printing devices	YES	YES
Office papers	YES	YES
Office supplies	YES	YES
Pesticides	NO	YES
Toner cartridges for laser printers	NO	NO

**Major accomplishments for 2007 include the following:**

- **Completion of the first 6 SF Approved Product lists in July 2007. (As of April, 2008, the total increased to 15 lists.)**
- **Contract awards for janitorial cleaners, janitorial papers, janitorial supplies, and compostable food containers**
- **Development of draft environment specifications and language for the new citywide Information Technology Store contract – one of the largest city contracts.**
- **Passage of a green purchasing policy by the Committee on Information Technology (COIT), which oversees all technology strategy and purchasing for San Francisco.**
- **Series of green cleaning trainings for custodians and custodial supervisors**
- **Revision and adoption of the 2008 SF Approved Pesticide list (Reduced-Risk Pesticide List)**
- **Development of templates and systems for collecting green product sales data from city vendors**
- **Experimental effort to enlist City vendors in providing green product sales data**
- **Background research on the feasibility of increasing the required recycled content of office papers**
- **Development of new lamp fixtures specifications to be included in 2008 Electrical Materials contract**

- **Active participation in national standards development for cleaning products and compact fluorescent lamps**
- **Revision of the SF Approved Green Purchasing webpage and other outreach materials**

A breakdown of specific activities and accomplishments for San Francisco's Green Purchasing Program is provided in **Table 2**, including categories of products covered, values of goods purchased, approximate percentages of total purchases that were SF Approved products, trainings organized, and purchasing trends. Additional explanations of program activities are provided below.

**Janitorial Products Activities:** Training programs on green cleaning products were begun in the Fall of 2007, with 11 trainings covering 262 City personnel in three major departments. These trainings are necessary not only to get the word out about the City's new products, but also to teach custodial staff what to expect from the new products, which sometimes require a modification of their practices. The trainings also emphasized methods for reducing the use of the more hazardous cleaning chemicals, for example, by refraining from using disinfectants as general purpose cleaners, or by using microfiber mops. These training programs are being further extended in 2008. Under funding from the San Francisco Asthma Task Force, SFE organized a learning session in February, 2007 on how to develop a standard for asthma-causing chemicals. As part of this cooperative effort, consultants also participated in a review of cleaning products used by the San Francisco Unified School District, and assisted in setting up a pilot project to test safer hard floor care systems.

**Computer/Information Technology (IT) Contract Development:** SFE staff presented at multiple meetings of the Committee on Information Technology (COIT) and developed language for green IT purchasing, which was eventually adopted as policy by COIT. In collaboration with OCA, SFE staff also participated in a series of meeting with computer manufacturers and computer end users, resulting in a set of draft environmental purchasing criteria for IT equipment. These criteria are being systematically reviewed with City staff and gradually incorporated as SF Approved lists.

**National Standards Development:** San Francisco staff participated in the development of several national green purchasing standards, including the revised Energy Star Compact Fluorescent Lamp standard, the revised Green Seal GS-37 standard for institutional cleaning products, and the revised Green Seal GS-8 standard for household cleaning products. In addition, SFE is a founding member and steering committee member of the Responsible Purchasing Network (RPN), a nonprofit organization dedicated to leveraging green purchasing resources ([www.responsiblepurchasing.org](http://www.responsiblepurchasing.org)).

**Reporting of Product Sales:** The purchasing system (ADPICS) currently used by the City is not well adapted for tracking purchases of specific products or categories of products, and therefore was not helpful in documenting progress in green purchasing. SFE staff determined that the most promising approach for tracking green product sales is through the use of vendor sales reports, which cover multiple departments' purchases. Strict contract language requiring detailed quarterly sales reports was therefore included with several of the newer contracts. As an experiment, SFE staff met with all the vendors awarded contracts under the janitorial cleaners (#83436) and janitorial papers (#83021) contracts in July, 2007, to solicit their cooperation. The vendors agreed to provide sales data on all purchases to the City, not just those covered by citywide term contracts. SFE followed up by creating computerized data reporting templates and by problem-solving with the vendors. A similar system was also established for vendors participating in the City's Lamps & Ballasts contract (#77405). In this case, the vendors were enlisted to help identify which product offerings meet SF standards, due to the very large number of products involved.

By March, 2008, SFE had succeeded in obtaining most of the required 2007 sales data. This data gives us a baseline to gauge our success, holds departments accountable to the ordinance requirements, and allows us to properly target outreach and training efforts. However, the investment of staff time was considerable and is not sustainable on a quarterly basis. Also, there is still no way to know the significance of off-contract sales, especially for smaller value items such as batteries. As a result, we intend to compile sales data no more than once per year, to emphasize key product areas rather than all products, to seek web-based product reporting systems from our vendors whenever possible, and to make better use of the existing ADPICS system to track departmental purchases.

**Other presentations:** Informational presentations on the program and its requirements were also increased in late 2007, with 63 City recycling coordinators and approximately 180 purchasers covered. Presentations on green purchasing were also made to the California State Association of Counties, Cal State - East Bay, and the DC Food Summit in Washington, DC.

### III. Trends

In general, departments are increasing their purchases of green products substantially. Purchases of green cleaning products increased from 1% to 59% of total purchases during a six month period. For janitorial papers, a lower recycled content standard (20% postconsumer content) was in place for the previous contract. At that time, approximately 55% of purchases complied with the standard. This percentage has increased dramatically to an average of 89% in 2007. The new products require a high recycled content plus the avoidance of chlorine-based whitening technologies.

For the lamps & ballasts, the finalization of the contract also resulted in significant improvements over previous purchasing patterns. Some of these results were presented in the [July, 2007 report](#). An increase in the purchase of long-life T8 fluorescent tubes from 3% to 69% of total T8 purchases, and an increase in the purchase of low-mercury T8s from 3% to 100%. From the 2007 data, 76% of all lamp ballasts purchased were SF Approved products. This figure does not include electronic ballasts for 4-pin CFLs, which are technically not yet SF Approved. With CFL ballasts included, 84% of purchases were green products. Overall, about 31% of all lamps purchases were SF Approved.

The progress varies greatly depending on the product category, as does our confidence in the data. For example, departments almost certainly purchased substantial quantities of batteries and compostable food containers off contract. The statistics in Table 2 do not tell the whole story, since they represent only the first six months of implementation for the janitorial cleaners, janitorial papers, and janitorial supplies contracts.

Finally, SFE and OCA blocked the sales of non-rechargeable batteries for the first two years of the office supplies contract (# 96703), and required waivers to remove the block on a purchase-by-purchase basis. While this appeared effective in encouraging the purchase of rechargeable batteries, it is known that many non-rechargeables were purchased off-contract. Conversations with battery experts and with purchasers revealed that there are a number of uses where rechargeable batteries are inappropriate or even dangerous, for example, in emergency equipment or sensitive electronic measuring devices. Ni-MH rechargeables leak their charge over time and may have slightly lower voltage than corresponding alkaline batteries. For these reasons, the block was removed from the Office Depot catalogue, and the percentage compliance went from 74% to 42%. This change is

almost certainly deceiving because non-rechargeable batteries that had previously been purchased off-contract were being purchased through Office Depot in late 2007.

**Lessons learned:**

- 1) Obtaining useable data from vendor sales reports requires a major investment in staff time. Reporting requirements need to be refined.
- 2) It is not practical to designate specific SF Approved products for those product categories that include large numbers of specific products, such as lamps & ballasts or computers. In these cases, it is preferable to create clear, easily documented purchasing criteria that vendors can apply to their catalogs, or that buyers can use themselves.
- 3) City staff expressed a need for information on green product performance, particular for chemical products such as cleaners and pesticides.
- 4) The greatest progress has been achieved in areas where SFE staff have worked closely with other departments to problem-solve, test new products, and remove obstacles.
- 5) Compliance with the SF Approved lists was higher with products that have lower brand loyalty, such as janitorial paper products and office papers. By contrast, janitorial cleaners and lamps were more difficult targets.
- 6) As a result of lessons learned from earlier waiver processes, the SFE will use waivers sparingly in its programs and emphasize vendor cooperation, enhanced monitoring of purchases, and end-user buy-in.

**IV. Performance of City Departments**

The experiment in collecting sales data directly from City vendors produced information on departmental compliance that will be very helpful in directing future activities. In particular, some clear leaders emerged in the purchase of environmentally preferable janitorial cleaners: City Hall, Dept. of Public Works (Storeroom and Hall of Justice locations), and SF MUNI. Sales records showed that most other City departments either purchased few green cleaning products or had incomplete data, suggesting that off-contract purchases took place. The Green Purchasing Program will follow up on these findings in the coming year.

Sales data from the lamps & ballasts contract is much more complex do to the very large number of products. Departments that were clear leaders in certain products lagged in other product categories. A complete analysis of these sales data is still in progress.

**V. Workplan for the Next Reporting Period**

**A. Batteries**

For the first time, SFE is including language on batteries in the electrical materials contract to require vendors to:

- 1) Sell SF Approved products listed on SF Dept. of Environment's website
- 2) Submit mandatory sales reports in the exact format provided by SFE (which will significantly reduce SFE staff time)

SFE will also explore the market availability of rechargeable alkaline batteries, which offer some performance advantages over Ni-MH batteries.

## ***B. Computers***

- 1) Collaborate with OCA in evaluating the Information Technology Store contract now pending.
- 2) Systematically review draft environmental specifications with City IT Managers and add these specifications to the SF Approved list for IT equipment. Specifications for servers are a high priority.
- 3) Conduct outreach on existing and future purchasing requirements, including the minimum EPEAT-Silver requirement for new desktops and laptops.

## ***C. Disposable Food Containers***

SFE staff have been working closely with hospital staff to incorporate compostable foodware into their food systems. Composting is currently limited because non-compostable foodware is mixed with the waste stream. The ultimate objective is to allow composting of all food waste from the food services.

## ***D. Food***

SFE will work with SF DPH to push the completion of a citywide healthy, local and sustainable food ordinance. This policy will likely require—as a start—that distributors provide full information on place of production and any relevant certifications (such as USDA Organic) for foods sold to the City.

## ***E. Janitorial Cleaners***

This is a critical time for organizing trainings, education and outreach on the use of green cleaning products. These activities will be held throughout the City in conjunction with the new SF Approved Product List for janitorial cleaners, which requires City staff to use only green products for certain common purposes.

In 2008, SFE will:

- 1) Follow up on departments and individuals who bought the most non-SF Approved products.
- 2) Extend trainings on janitorial cleaning products to DPW and other large pools of City custodians.
- 3) Develop new specifications and SF Approved lists for disinfectants and possible hard floor care products.
- 4) Complete existing effort to develop a specification that filters out asthma-causing chemicals.

## ***F. Lamps***

A new lamps contract is now in preparation, and SFE is updating its technical specifications on mercury content, energy efficiency, and product life to reflect rapid progress in the industry. In 2008, SFE will:

- 1) Follow up on departments and individuals who bought the most non-SF Approved products.
- 2) Be the first program in the nation to post online a comprehensive list of environmentally-preferable lamps with their mercury levels.
- 3) Work on the next electrical materials contract to exclude fixtures and ballasts for T12s, mercury vapor and other types of low-efficiency, high-mercury lamps.
- 4) Hold meetings with end-users and SF PUC to increase purchases of EPP lamps and other lighting equipment.
- 5) Work on the next Lamps & ballasts contract in 2008, which will include ways to encourage vendors to offer better prices on certain environmentally preferable lamp products.

**G. Outreach**

- 1) Organize at least one event (“SF Green Product Forum”) for late 2008 aimed at providing authoritative information on green products, including environmental impacts and performance
- 2) Increase meetings with key City departmental staff to inform them of ordinance requirements
- 3) Organize symposia and/or presentations on the Green Purchasing Program for regional and national audiences.
- 3) Improve email and web outreach to develop brand identity for “SF Approved.”

**Table 2. Sales of SF Approved Products and Green Purchasing Program Activities, 2007**

PRODUCT CATEGORY	PRODUCT SUB-CATEGORY	% of expenditures for SF Approved green products	Total \$ of SF Approved green products purchased	Data Collection Method	Comments on Data	No. of trainings & end user meetings	No. trained	SFE Contact Person
COMPOSTABLE FOODWARE	Paper Napkins and Towels	N/A	\$37,140.86	Vendor sales reports were requested from DPH, the only dept. using the disposable foodware contract. Data does NOT include sales made by other city depts. or any off-contract sales.		2	6	Julie Bryant
	Hot Cups	N/A	\$6,732.42					
	Cold Cups	N/A	\$72,534.73					
	Plates and Containers	N/A	\$54,632.53					
	Eating Utensils	0%	\$0.00					
	Aluminum containers and wrap	N/A	\$18,456.20					
	Bags	0%	\$0.00					
	To-Go Containers (clamshells)	N/A	\$22,325.00					
	Stir sticks	N/A	\$163.20					
MULTI-FUNCTIONAL DEVICES (MFDs)	Ricoh MFDs	N/A	307 units	Vendor sales reports	MFDs became widely available to City users through City contract since 2006. Prices of machines are based on number of copies the department makes.	N/A	N/A	
	Xerox	N/A	357 units					
	Konica Minolta	N/A	278 units					
OFFICE PAPERS	All major sizes	93%	\$524,766.00	Data only includes sales reports from Corporate Express (does not include sales from Give Something Back)	SFE was involved primarily in outreach for this program	50	1,000	Paul Ledesma
OFFICE SUPPLIES	Batteries	42%	\$8,596.57		Proportional sales of rechargeable batteries decreased because SFE removed the block on OfficeDepot.com for non-rechargeable batteries, and off-contract sales decreased.	4	150	Jessian Choy
LAMPS	CFLS	63%	\$3,657.60	vendor sales reports from Omega. \$ screw-in CFLs / \$ screw-in CFLs + incandescents <b>units of screw-in CFLs / all units of screw-in CFLs + incandescents = 10.4%</b>	Some city depts bought a significant amount of non-EPP lamps: incandescents (standard, halogen, minis), T12s, high-mercury standard metal halides & mercury vapor lamps because existing fixtures & ballasts require these types of lamps to be used.	2 trainings, 5 end user meetings	Approx. 150	Jessian Choy
	TOTAL LAMPS	31%	\$152,753.80	\$ SF Approved lamps / \$ total lamps purchased (excluding mini-incandescents)  (data incomplete)				
LAMP BALLASTS		85%	\$40,678.20	\$ SF Approved ballasts / \$ all ballasts purchased				

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JANITORIAL CLEANERS	*Degreasers	74%	\$10,406.00	Vendor sales reports. \$ SF Approved Products/ all products purchased within subcategory	SFE is investigating why no glass cleaners were purchased in 2007.  Janitorial cleaners that are marked with * are MANDATORY for city employees to buy.	1 vendor meeting, 2 end user meetings, 8 trainings	262	Chris Geiger
	Acid Bowl Cleaners	76%	\$450.00					
	*Bathroom, Tub, Tile	0%	\$0.00					
	Carpet Cleaners	7%	\$936.00					
	Disinfecting Cleaners	1%	\$3,443.20					
	*General Purpose Cleaners	29%	\$1,718.50					
	*Glass cleaners	0%	\$0.00					
	Nonacid bowl cleaner	100%	\$746.40					
	hard floor	55%	\$3,692.00					
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>\$21,392.10</b>					
JANITORIAL PAPERS	Paper Towels	100%	\$464,223.61	Vendor sales reports. \$ SF Approved Products/\$ all products purchased				
	Toilet Seat Covers	100%	\$85,766.97					
	Toilet Tissue	58%	\$115,982.19					
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>89%</b>	<b>\$665,972.77</b>					