

Know your paper

A guide to purchasing recycled content office paper

Demand for paper remains high, with Australians using about 1.72 million tonnes of printing and writing paper each year – or the equivalent to more than 40 million trees. Currently office paper is the largest component of solid waste generated by offices. It is estimated that in NSW over 700,000 tonnes of paper and paper products are sent to landfill each year.

There are many reasons why buying recycled content office paper is beneficial, including:

- **Reduces landfill impacts and greenhouse gases** – by utilising recovered fibres, recycled content paper can help lower the quantity of paper disposed to landfill, and consequently reduce greenhouse gas emissions such as methane. Paper disposed to landfill is a significant contributor to methane gas, which has a global warming potential that is 21 times more damaging than carbon dioxide.
- **Conserves resources** – the manufacture of recycled content paper can consume up to 50% less energy and 60% less water compared to manufacturing paper from virgin fibres.
- **Supports recycling markets** – buying recycled content papers also supports the economy and diversity of secondary markets, while providing jobs in the recycling industry.

Know your paper (the Guide) lists sixteen brands of 80gsm all-purpose office paper available in NSW that contain recycled fibre. The Guide is designed to assist anyone wishing to purchase recycled content office paper by providing a range of technical and environmental information about the papers.

Checklist for purchasing office paper

- ✓ **Consider your needs and what you will use the paper for** – It is important to choose a paper that is fit for purpose.
- ✓ **Consider the proportion of recycled content** – Recycled content paper is paper that contains a proportion of either pre- or post consumer fibres. Recycled content papers included in the Guide range in fibre composition from 100% recycled fibre to 10% recycled fibre, with the remainder made up of virgin fibres.
- ✓ **Consider the post-consumer fibre content** – Fibres for recycled content papers are sourced from 'pre-consumer' or 'post-consumer' waste. Pre-consumer material is diverted from the waste stream during a manufacturing process (but not by the paper manufacturer itself), while post-consumer waste is generated by consumers.
- ✓ **Are the environmental claims independently verified?** There are several independent labelling and certification schemes that will add credibility to the paper. Different papers carry different claims.
- ✓ **Avoid papers that have used chlorine in the bleaching process** – Health and environmental concerns are associated with the use of chlorines. Papers manufactured and described as Totally Chlorine Free (TCF) or Processed Chlorine Free (PCF) can still be white as they may use bleaching agents other than chlorine such as oxygen or hydrogen peroxide. Elemental Chlorine Free (ECF) does not use the most harmful chlorine compounds, but still does use chlorine.



A wide range of high-quality recycled content papers is now available due to improvements in waste recovery and paper manufacturing processes. So, if you have avoided recycled content papers because of reservations related to paper quality, now is the time to reconsider your paper needs and test the performance of a recycled content paper.



Recycled content paper listing

There are many aspects to consider when choosing a recycled content paper, including technical specifications, environmental characteristics and credentials, country of manufacture and the manufacturers' recommended use.

Table 1 provides a summary of the 16 recycled content papers listed in the Guide. For further details including where to buy recycled content papers, check out the full version of the Guide

Table 1: Recycled content papers listed in *Know your paper – a guide for purchasing recycled content office paper*

Paper name	Country of manufacture	Recycled fibre (%)
Australian 10%	Australia	10% Pre- and post-consumer
Australian 80%	Australia	80% Pre- and post-consumer
Canon 100% Recycled	Austria	67% Post-consumer and 33% pre-consumer
Ecocern	Australia	100% Post-consumer
Era Pure Copy	France	100% Pre- and post-consumer
Evolve Business	UK	100% Pre- and post-consumer
Evolve Office	UK	100% Pre- and post-consumer
EXP50R	Australia	50% Pre- and post-consumer
Green Wrap	Australia	60% Pre- and post-consumer
IQ Triotec Unique	Austria	30% Post-consumer
OfficeMax 100% Recycled	Germany	100% Post-consumer
Officeworks Recycled	Germany	100% Post-consumer
Recycled Supreme	Germany	100% Post-consumer
Reflex Recycled	Australia	50% Pre- and post-consumer
Reflex 100% Recycled	Australia	100% Pre- and post-consumer
Vision Pure White	Germany	100% Post-consumer

Contacts and further information

Know your paper – a guide for purchasing recycled content office paper, can be downloaded from www.environment.nsw.gov.au

or email sustainability@environment.nsw.gov.au to request a hard copy – which includes samples of all 16 recycled content papers listed in the Guide.

Published by:

Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW
 59–61 Goulburn Street, Sydney
 Phone: (02) 9995 5000 (switchboard)
 Fax: (02) 9995 5999
 TTY: (02) 9211 4723
 Email: info@environment.nsw.gov.au
 Website: www.environment.nsw.gov.au

DECC 2009/92 ISBN 978 1 74122 956 1

Published January 2009

© Copyright State of NSW and the Department of Environment and Climate Change NSW

Printed on 100% recycled paper



'Close the Loop'

The combination of successful office recycling programs and buying recycled content paper helps complete the cycle for paper recycling.



Recycled paper is available in a wide range of grades suitable for use in the office such as photocopying, laser printing and faxing.