



ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR AUTOMOTIVE PRODUCTS

The District of Columbia is committed to procuring quality goods and services in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost that support the District in meeting its sustainability goals. Compliance with specification guidance is sufficient to meet PPRA Section 1101(a) environmentally preferable procurement requirements. Additional contextual information is provided here to assist in the implementation of the specification. To access solicitation documents with full contract language, [click here](#).



BENEFITS

Re-refined motor oil requires **85% less energy** to produce than conventional oils

Retread tires sell for **30-50% less** than comparable new tires

The U.S. Army estimated savings of **\$5 per gallon** by switching to recycled antifreeze

SOURCES

<https://archive.epa.gov/epawaste/conservation/materials/tires/web/html/markets.html>

<https://www.ecopoweroil.com/>

Antifreeze Recycling, Fact Sheet 37-006-0221 at <https://phc.amedd.army.mil/>

Scope

The environmental specification addresses additional information for automotive products for cars and light-duty trucks, including tires, rims, lubricating oil, hydraulic fluids, gear oils, and engine coolants (antifreeze). Light-duty vehicles are defined as all class 1, 2, and 3 vehicles as defined by the US FDOT.

COPY AND PASTE THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATION LANGUAGE INTO THE REQUIREMENTS SECTION OF YOUR STATEMENT OF WORK

EPPS Requirements

Automotive products purchased by the District of Columbia shall meet the environmental criteria defined below:

PRODUCT	CRITERIA
Tires	Retread
Rims	Refurbished
Lubricating oil: engine lubricating oils, hydraulic fluids, gear oils	25% or higher re-refined oil base stock (by weight)
Engine coolants (antifreeze)	50% or higher recycled content (by weight)



Additional Information

Automotive products reflect a large and diverse group of items; therefore, this specification focuses on automotive products for which sustainable and reliable alternatives are widely available. This specification follows the [U.S. EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines](#), which serve as the model for specifications in many other jurisdictions around the country

Retread tires offer significant environmental benefits and cost savings. Retreading involves removing the tread (outside) of the tire and adding a new tread; this is a sustainable alternative to discarding old tires in landfills and purchasing new tires. Passenger and light pick-up tires are retreaded according to standards established by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Studies such as a [2009 study](#) by the Washington State Department of Transportation have found that retread tires are as safe as comparable new tires. A number of jurisdictions around the country specify retread tires, including California, Massachusetts, North Carolina, and Washington State.

Refurbished rims offer benefits similar to retread tires. Purchasing refurbished instead of new rims reduces the use of virgin materials and means that fewer discarded rims are disposed in landfills. Refurbished rims may also cost significantly less than comparable new rims.

Re-refined lubricating oil conserves oil, a finite resource, and reduces pollution caused by the improper disposal of used oil. The recycling of used oil has evolved, and today, re-refined lubricating oil is subject to the same performance standards as virgin oil. According to the EPA, extensive laboratory testing and field studies have found that re-refined oil is equivalent to virgin oil and can even outperform virgin oil.

Several major automobile manufacturers have indicated that using re-refined oils will not void warranties. [EPA's Guidelines](#) recommend that agencies specify 25% re-refined oil or higher. Higher standards are available; for example, the City of San Francisco specifies 75% re-refined oil.

Recycled engine coolant (antifreeze) reduces the risk of soil contamination and water pollution resulting from improper disposal of coolant and may be less expensive than new coolant. According to EPA, recycled antifreeze meets the same nationally recognized performance specifications as new coolant and might even be purer than virgin coolant.

The EPA Guidelines do not specify a minimum percentage of recycled content for antifreeze. Jurisdictions including Massachusetts and Washington State specify varying percentages; for example, King County (Washington) recommends at least 50% recycled content, and Massachusetts requires 100%-recycled ethylene glycol in both ready to use and concentrated forms.



Environmental Hotspots The most important environmental benefits associated with this specification

**MATERIALS USE /
SUSTAINABLE SOURCING**

Recycled tires, rims, lubricating oil, and engine coolant conserve virgin resources required to making new products. For example, EPA [reports](#) that every year, retreading saves more than 400 million gallons of oil in North America. EPA also [reports](#) that it takes just one gallon of used oil, compared with 42 gallons of crude oil, to produce 2.5 quarts of lubricating oil.

ENERGY CONSUMPTION

Transport, processing, and manufacture of recycled products require less total energy than producing and transporting virgin products. According to statistics cited in an [MIT study](#), tire retreading can reduce production energy demands for tires by up to 66%.

RECYCLED CONTENT

This specification requires a range of recycled content for different automotive products, which reduces the demand for raw materials.

TOXICITY/HEAVY METALS

Antifreeze and lubricating oil contain several toxic chemicals including those that are suspected to cause cancer. Recycling rather than disposing of these products can limit exposure to toxics caused by improper disposal of used products.

END-OF-LIFE DISPOSAL

Buying recycled lubricating oil and antifreeze prevents these products from being improperly disposed (e.g., poured down the drain), where they can contaminate soils and water. Purchasing retread tires and refurbished rims mean these products are not sent to landfills. According to EPA, retreading helps divert thousands of scrap tires from disposal every year.

Significance to the District

PPRA

[PPRA §104](#) specifies that products meet Default Environmental Standards. [The U.S. EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines](#) recommend use of retread tires, re-refined motor oils and antifreeze. The EPA Comprehensive Guidelines are a Default Environmental Standard.

For more information about sustainable specification guidance or the District's Sustainable Purchasing Program, please visit: <https://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing-program> or call the OCP Procurement Center of Excellence at: [202.724.4477](tel:202.724.4477) or email sppdc@dc.gov.