



SCOPE

Applies to the following

- Traditional printing (business cards, brochures, pocket folders, mailers, flyers)
- Signage printing services (banners, trade show displays, large posters)
- Specialty printing services (labels, stickers, decals, promotional products, paychecks/forms requiring security clearance)

REQUIREMENTS

Printing services purchased by the District of Columbia shall meet the environmental criteria defined below.

Ink

Contractors shall use vegetable-based or soy-based ink that meets the requirements of the Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1994.

Paper

For printing on paper and paper-based materials:

- For printing on uncoated paper, contractors shall use paper that contains at least 30% postconsumer recycled content (PCRC) and that is certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
- For printing on materials other than uncoated paper, contractors shall use materials that meet the [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines for PCRC](#), as listed below.
 - Reprographic Paper, Offset Paper, Forms Bond, Wove Envelope Paper, Cotton Fiber Paper, Text & Cover Paper, and File Folders shall be 30% PCRC
 - Kraft Envelope Paper, Supercalendered, Machine Finish Groundwood, Papeteries, Check Safety Paper, and Coated Printing Paper shall be 10% PCRC
 - Bristols, Cards (Index, Postal, and Other, Including Index Sheets), Tags & Tickets should be 20% PCRC

ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR PRINTING SERVICES

*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. The supplemental recommendations, although recommended, are not required for compliance with PPRA 1101 (a). **To access full contract language, [click here](#).***



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Vegetable-based inks use vegetable oil in place of petroleum. These inks are less toxic than petroleum-based inks, releasing fewer volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the environment. Additionally, vegetable-based inks use renewable resources in place of non-renewable petroleum. [The Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1994](#) sets requirements for the Federal government for the minimum allowable vegetable-based content in printing inks, which are noted above for this specification.

SIGNIFICANCE TO THE DISTRICT

This specification supports compliance with the [Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1994](#) which sets requirements for the Federal government for the minimum allowable vegetable-based content in printing inks. Inks should contain at least the following percentages of vegetable oil for compliance:

- News ink, 40%
- Sheet-fed ink, 20%
- Forms ink, 20%
- Heat-set ink, 10%

BENEFITS

7,430

Pounds of greenhouse gases avoided each year if the District purchases 100,000 sheets of 30% PCRC paper instead of non-recycled paper

FSC-certified forests have significantly lower rates of deforestation than non-certified forests

Soy-based inks release about 20% fewer VOCs than petroleum-based inks

SOURCES

<https://www.tropicalforestalliance.org/home>

For more information about sustainable specification guidance or the District's Sustainable Purchasing Program, please visit <https://doee.dc.gov/service/sustainable-purchasing> or email sppdc@dc.gov.