

high marks

for the

environment



it's easy to be green
with gsa

by Tom Daily and Wendell Garner

GSA's goal is to be the **preferred source** for environmental **products and services** in the Federal Government. To this end, GSA continually updates contracts to **ensure** that its supply vendors offer products that **meet** the Environmental Protection Agency (**EPA**) and the Department of Energy (**DOE**) environmental requirements, when appropriate. GSA highlights, in its Supply Catalog and on-line systems, the products in its Stock and Special Order Programs that have **environmental attributes**, such as recycled content. GSA's supply vendors are required to highlight such **Schedule Program** products in their individual price lists and catalogs, as well as the *GSA Advantage!*[®] on-line system.

GSA focuses on addressing the three major areas of environmental emphasis: waste minimization, natural resource conservation, and pollution reduction/prevention. This emphasis is necessary to correct years of abuse created by increased, and for the most part, unbridled, industrial production necessary to meet the challenges of the economic and population growth of our country, and which, unfortunately, resulted in a negative impact on public health and our supply of natural resources.

For each of these categories, GSA's participation in environmental initiatives results in appropriately modified products being carried in its supply system.

waste minimization

Our society produces tremendous amounts of waste that aggravate already existing problems with limited landfill space. The mantra for combating this problem is: reduce, reuse, and recycle. Plainly speaking, reducing the amount of 'stuff' going into landfills begins with using less in the first place. An example in this area is the use of 'double sided' copying and making minimal numbers of copies – better yet, no copies, when possible/feasible. As more stuff is reused, there is less of it to dispose of. Finally, if the stuff can be recycled into other products, that also keeps it out of the landfill. Of course, the catch here is to have a demand/market for the recycled content products; otherwise, there is no point in collecting the recyclable materials. Also, it's important to focus on what is referred to as 'postconsumer' materials, e.g., paper that has served its initial purpose as a product and would traditionally have been put into the trash.

associated programs:

CPG – This stands for Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines that have been established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for various categories of products. Federal agencies are required to purchase and use these products with EPA specified minimal amounts of postconsumer recovered material content. (www.epa.gov/cpg)

Biobased – This category addresses products made with recycled/recovered materials utilizing biological products or renewable domestic agricultural (plant, animal, and marine) or forestry materials. The Department of Agriculture (USDA) is in the process of developing procurement guidelines for this category. (www.biobased.oce.usda.gov)

PRIME – This is the U.S. Navy's Plastics Removal in the Marine Environment Program. Its focus is on packaging materials – keeping them to a minimum and ensuring their biodegradability. Similar benefits for land-based customers are evident. (www.navicp.navy.mil/07/plastic_removal_marine.htm)

natural resource conservation

One of the effects of the increased industrial production referred to above was the rapid consumption of our natural resources, such as crude oil. Because of the close working relationship with EPA and the Department of Energy (DOE), and its cooperative interaction with industry, GSA is able to make a variety of energy and/or water saving products available. These range from relatively simple products, such as minimal or no flush toilets and low flow showerheads, to somewhat more complex items, such as energy saving household appliances, computers, printers, and other office equipment.

associated programs:

Energy Star – This is an EPA/DOE Program that identifies specific energy using categories of items and establishes energy efficiency criteria for each. Examples include computers, printers, and other office equipment. (www.energystar.gov)

Energy Efficient – This is a DOE Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) that establishes energy efficient criteria for product categories not included under Energy Star. (www.eere.energy.gov/femp/procurement)

Low Standby Power – This is a DOE/FEMP initiative that has established efficiency recommendations for office equipment, audio/video equipment, and other electronic items that have standby power devices attached or built-in. (http://www.eere.energy.gov/femp/procurement/standby_power.html)

Energy Services – Service contracts that assist agencies with energy management and audits, as well as procurement and use of natural gas, electricity, and energy from renewable sources. (www.gsa.gov/energyservices)

pollution reduction/prevention

Another negative effect of the increased industrial production was the degradation of our air and water. GSA strives to include a whole host of paints, coatings, cleaning products, and other chemically related items in its supply system that have reduced pollutant ingredients, e.g., low VOCs, and are, therefore, less detrimental to the environment and safer for those who use them.

associated programs:

National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutant (NESHAP) – (<http://www.neshap.com/>)

California South Coast Air Quality Management District – (<http://www.aqmd.gov/>)

EPA Significant New Alternative Program (SNAP) – (<http://www.epa.gov/Ozone/snap/general/index.html>)

EPA Environmental Technology Verification Program – (<http://www.epa.gov/etv/>)

Environmental Services – Service contracts that assist agencies with preparing environmental impact statements, compliance requirements, environmental/occupational training, remediation, and other needs.
(www.gsa.gov/environmental)



GSA is committed to making a wide range of environmental products and services available to Federal buyers, and has made it easier to identify these kinds of products in its supply system through the use of special icons that appear in the lower left hand corner of the product field in both on-line systems, GSA Global Supply (www.GSAGlobalsupply.gsa.gov) and GSA Advantage![®] (www.GSAadvantage.gsa.gov).

GSA also has an environmental products website (www.gsa.gov/enviro) that contains a wealth of environmental product and service information, including the 2003-2004 edition of the Environmental Products and Services Guide (EPSG) located in the 'Other GSA Topics' section. The 'enviro' site also contains applicable laws, Executive orders, and other relevant regulations, as well as links to other agency sites and various environmental organizations. Information on environmental services contracts can be found at www.gsa.gov/environmentalservices and information on energy services can be found at www.gsa.gov/energyservices. Below is a listing of the various environmental icons and their explanations.



Comprehensive Procurement Guideline -

Meets or exceeds US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Recovered Material Advisory Notice (RMAN) standard for recycled/recovered material content.

- Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), Sect 6002.
- Executive Order 13101.



Recycled/Recovered Material Content –

other than CPG and Biobased.



Biobased –

Recycled/recovered material utilizing biological products or renewable domestic agricultural (plant, animal, and marine) or forestry materials.

- 2002 Farm Act, Title IX, Sect 9002.
- EOs 13101 and 13134.



US Navy's Plastics Removal in Marine Environment Program.

Focus is on packaging materials – minimal and biodegradable.



Energy Star –

Meets or exceeds US Dept of Energy (DOE) and EPA energy efficiency requirements.

- 1992 Energy Policy Act.
- Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Subpart 23.203.
- EO 13123.



Energy Efficient –

Meets or exceeds DOE Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) energy efficiency recommendations.

- 1992 Energy Policy Act.
- FAR Subpart 23.203.
- EOs 13123 and 13221.



Pollution Prevention Oriented –

Contains reduced pollutants, thereby contributing to clean air and water initiatives. Examples: low volatile organic compounds (VOCs), lead-free, chlorine-free, etc.

- Clean Air and Clean Water Acts.
- EO 13101.



Non-Toxic –

Self explanatory.



National Emissions Standards for

Hazardous Air Pollutant –

“As applied” formulation meets or exceeds applicable VOC and hazardous air pollutant emission limits.

- 40th Code of Federal Regulation, Part 63.



California South Coast Air Quality Management District –

Meets or exceeds applicable air emissions standards established by the California Code of Regulations and/or the aforementioned organization.



EPA Significant New Alternative

Program –

Meets or exceeds requirements of said program as a suitable substitute for ozone depleting substances.



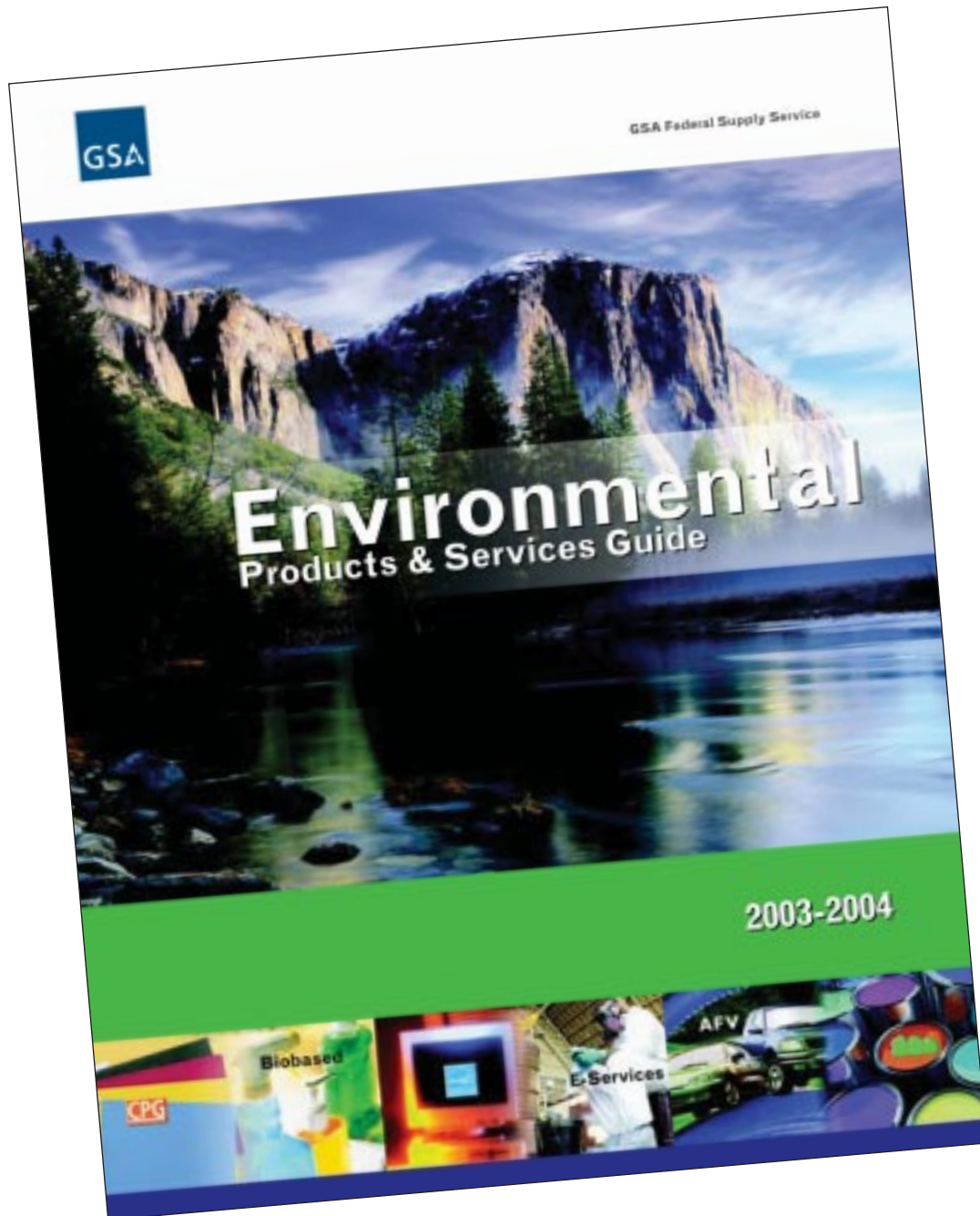
EPA Environmental Technology Verification Program –

Is or contains an innovative technical solution beneficial to human health or the environment, based on evaluation under said program.



Green Seal of Approval – Meets or exceeds voluntary standards for 'environmental preferability', as established by the Green Seal organization.

GSA's 2003-2004 Environmental Products and Services Guide is now available!



To obtain a copy of GSA's Environmental Products and Services Guide, visit the "Other GSA Topics" section of our environmental website at www.gsa.gov/enviro, or if a hard copy of the EPSG is required, it can be obtained by contacting the GSA Centralized Mailing List Service at (817) 334-5215, or go to www.fss.gsa.gov and click on the Environmental menu choice under the products menu.

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