

Janitorial Paper Products

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Did you know?

The average person uses 20,000 sheets of toilet paper per year which is about 100 single rolls!

Minimum Sustainable Recommendations

To ensure sustainable janitorial paper products are purchased, the following requirements should be outlined in the bid document:

- Paper towels and napkins must be EcoLogo or Green Seal certified.
- Facial Tissue must be EcoLogo or Green Seal certified.
- Bathroom tissue must be EcoLogo or Green Seal certified.
- Hand towels tissue must be EcoLogo or Green Seal certified.

Other things to consider

Procurement of sustainable materials can contribute to the achievement of existing green building certifications such as BOMA BESt and the LEED Canada Green Building Rating System for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance (EBOM). These rating systems provide performance standards for the operations and maintenance of existing buildings and support third party certifications when purchasing janitorial paper products.

In keeping with provincial commitments to minimize greenhouse gas emissions and solid waste production, the vendor should be encouraged to develop sustainable delivery strategies;

1. Product delivery consolidations
2. Efficient route planning
3. No idling of vehicles
4. Use of fuel efficient delivery vehicles

What are the issues?

The purchase of extra soft and white toilet paper, paper towels and tissues have a significant impact on the environment.

To obtain the "extra soft" you require the long fibers from standing trees. Fibers from recycled paper are too short and cannot be laid out and puffed up during the manufacturing process to make the softer tissue. Using trees to make janitorial tissues, which are immediately discarded after use, is a miss-use of our forest resource. As well, turning standing trees into tissue takes more water to produce a product and produces more waste water and solid waste than turning recycled fiber into tissue.

To produce the "extra white" colour, pulp and paper mills may use chlorine bleaching. When pulp and paper mills use chlorine-based chemicals to bleach pulp, the chemicals react with organic molecules in the wood and other fibers to create many toxic by-products including dioxin and furans, some of the most toxic human-made chemicals. Once released into the air and water it is persistent because natural bacteria cannot break it down. Health effects associated with human exposure to dioxins include skin disorders, liver problems, impairment of the immune system, the endocrine

This document contains key considerations and suggestions for sustainable specifications and standards. Use of these specifications are intended to be guidelines for public sector procurers. Mention of any company name or product does not constitute or imply endorsement.

system and reproductive functions effects on the developing nervous system and other developmental events (Health Canada, 2005).

What are the options?

Consumers that understand the environmental issues associated with janitorial papers recognize that using our forests to make janitorial tissues is a very poor use of this resource. They are willing to select slightly less plush tissues made from recycled paper and support efforts to minimize deforestation, habitat loss and climate change.

The impacts of chlorine bleaching on human health and the environment have led to some mills using alternative methods to bleach fibers. Many mills now use oxygen-based bleaching, without any chlorine chemicals. This includes "totally chlorine-free" and "processed chlorine-free" bleaching. These methods use oxygen, ozone or hydrogen peroxide to bleach the pulp. A switch to oxygen-based chlorine-free bleaching can eliminate dioxin pollution from pulp and paper mills.

Both EcoLogo and Green Seal have developed third party certification criteria for paper towel, tissue and toilet paper. The criteria stipulated in these certifications help to mitigate the environmental issues associated with pulp and paper mills as noted above.

Sustainable purchasing and climate change

Both Ecologo and Green Seal support manufacturing practices that conserve energy and natural resources. As an example, in order to qualify for Green Seal certification, paper towel must contain at least 40% post consumer waste (PCW). According to the Cascades environmental benefits calculator, purchasing 100 cases of paper towel made from 40% PCW (weighing approximately 17 kg/case) would reduce emissions by 57 kg compared to the same amount of paper towel made from 100% virgin fiber product. <http://www.afh.cascades.com/en/distributor/hand-towel-rolls-vs-folded-paper-towels/>.

References

Canada Green Building Council (2009). *LEED Canada Green Building Rating System for Existing Buildings: Operations and Maintenance.*

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