

# GREEN

# R E P O R T

GREEN SEAL'S  
*Choose*

## OFFICE PRODUCTS

Offices such as yours use many different products to communicate, organize and maintain information. In addition, many office activities typify the environmental problems facing our society, as most offices consume water, energy, paper and other products and generate a variety of wastes and pollutants. Because you need and use these products daily, the purchase of "green" office supplies is an excellent way to reduce environmental impacts.

*We researched several manufacturers' products, focussing on recycled content, recyclability, manufacturing efficiencies and by-products, and availability.*

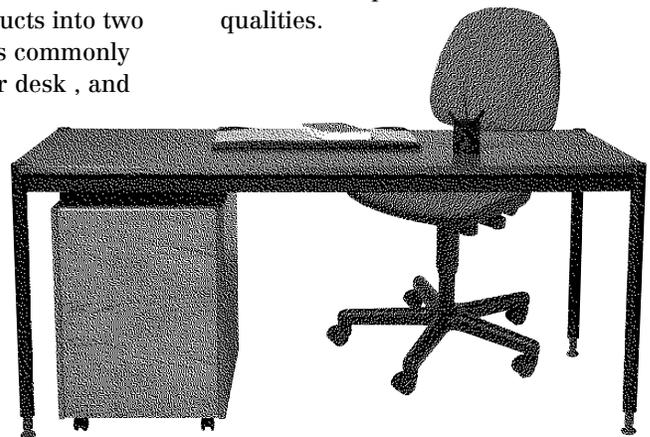
Commercial waste, which includes office waste, is approximately 35 - 45% of the total amount of municipal solid waste generated in this country. In this report, Green Seal attempts to lessen the flow of waste material to the landfill by recommending the use of reusable or recycled content office products. We recommend simple product substitutions that offer the benefit of lessened environmental impact.

We have divided the recommended products into two categories; products commonly found on top of your desk, and products used for information organization.

Desk supplies include refillable pens, pencils, diskettes, self-stick notes,

memo pads (of all sizes), and desk-top organizers. Organizational supplies include file folders, binders, and labels.

We researched several manufacturers' products, focussing on recycled content, recyclability, manufacturing efficiencies and by-products, and availability. We recommend over twenty products in two separate tables, each of which catalogues the items by environmental characteristics and indicates unique qualities.



## The Greening of Your Office

Recycled content is one of the primary ways to identify “green” products for your office, as manufacturing products with recycled content generally means using less water and energy. Therefore, buying office supplies with recycled content has a two-fold beneficial effect; it minimizes the effect of extracting virgin resources and it saves energy.

Green Seal recommends using the percentage of postconsumer recycled content as the first criteria for comparing office supplies. We highlight as green buys products that contain a minimum of 20% postconsumer content. We also look closely at the product’s recyclability. If a product is recyclable at the end of its useful life, more waste is minimized and material is recovered for another manufacturing cycle.

Paper making creates several types of waste, from stack discharges, to waste water flows, to sludge. Office products made without postconsumer fiber

The **Choose Green Report** is published monthly for Green Seal Environmental Partners. To become an Environmental Partner, or to receive a sample copy of this newsletter, contact Green Seal at (202) 331-7337 x 31.

Editor, *E. Jay Murphy*  
Contributors, *Valerie Bedziner, Alexis Annis*  
Environmental Partners Program Director,  
*Alexis Annis*  
Design, *Cutting Edge Graphics and 1050 A.D., Inc.*

This report was written with the support of the Summit Foundation and the Homeland Foundation.

Printed on Green Seal-certified  
*Mohawk Satin Cool White Recycled paper,*  
25% postconsumer content

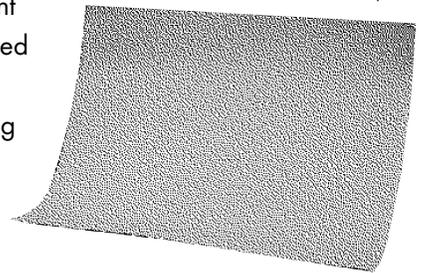
Copyright © 1997, Green Seal, Inc.  
[www.greenseal.org](http://www.greenseal.org)



**G**reen Seal has received comments concerning the bleaching terminology used in our Copy Papers report. We used the term totally chlorine free (TCF) to describe paper that is unbleached or processed without chlorine or its derivatives in the manufacture of the current sheet. This definition allows the recycled content of a new sheet to have been originally bleached with chlorine.

Some organizations prefer to use TCF only when referring to a sheet containing virgin fiber that has not been bleached with chlorine or any chlorine derivative. This definition precludes the paper from having any recycled content. Processed chlorine free (PCF) or secondarily chlorine free (SCF) are alternative terms used to describe paper with recycled content that may have been previously bleached with chlorine compounds, although no chlorine bleach was used in the making of the new sheet.

Green Seal is reexamining its terminology to describe bleaching technology and would like to solicit comments from its Environmental Partners and newsletter subscribers. Please forward your comments about which terms you feel are appropriate.



content do nothing to lessen these waste flows. Purchasing only paper office products with post consumer content diverts paper waste from the landfill, while minimizing the number of trees cut down, and the associated manufacturing impacts.

Office products containing plastic contribute to the depletion of oil reserves. In addition, petroleum extraction and processing produces many pollutants; from bottom sludges associated with crude transport, to distillation waste water flows, to air pollutants released during the catalytic cracking process. We recommend plastic office products with postconsumer content in order to lessen these impacts.

## Green Product Benefits

We asked manufacturers to provide information on the bleaching process used for their paper based products. As discussed in the September 1996 *Choose Green Report* on Copy Papers, research has shown a connection between mill chlorine-containing effluent and the creation of organochlorides,

*We recommend products based on their recycled content and their recyclability.*

## Organizational Products

	Product	Manufacturer	Brand	%TRC	%PC	Recyclable	Other	Available
	file folders	Esselte America 516-741-3200	Earthwise	100%	15%	yes		office supply stores, distributors
✓	file folders	Smead 612-437-4111		70%	25%	yes	water-based inks & pigments	office supply stores
✓	file folders	Riverside Paper Co. 414-749-2200	Ecology	100%	35%	yes		office supply stores, direct sales
✓	file folders	Acco USA 800-222-6462		75%	50%	yes		office supply stores
✓	binders	Samsill 800-255-1100		75%	35%	yes		distributors, office supply stores
✓	binders	Amazing Recycled Products 800-241-2174		50%	50%	yes		direct sales, distributors
✓	binders	Acco USA 800-222-6462		50-75%	30-50%	yes		office supply stores
✓	binders	Avery Dennison 800-252-8379	UltraTUF and Pressboard	50-59%	30-45%	yes		office supply stores, distributors
✓	labels	Z-International 816-474-8400	Z-echo	50-100%	20-80%	yes		direct sales

%TRC = percentage total recycled content

%PC = percentage postconsumer

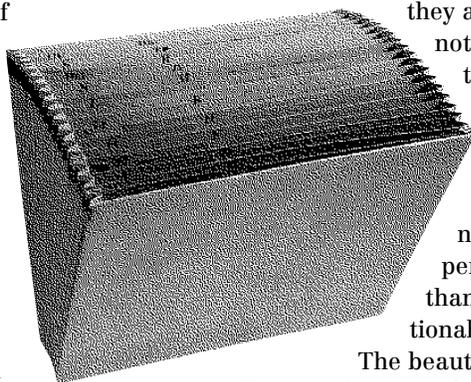
✓ = Green Buy

© 1997, Green Seal, Inc. Use of this chart for commercial purposes is prohibited. Information in this table was confirmed by the manufacturer.

including dioxins. We have included information on the bleaching process of the recommended products where it was available.

### Performance

You should see no difference in performance between the products we recommend and conventional products you currently use. If products



don't perform, no matter how environmentally sound they are, they will not be viable alternatives.

However, don't expect these products to necessarily perform better than conventional products.

The beauty of "green" office supplies is in the ease with which you can make the switch.

### Office Recycling

Green Seal has an in-house collection system to separate recyclable paper from waste. We separate newspapers, magazines and several paper grades for our building manager to collect and sell to a paper broker. However, we do not include the ubiquitous self-stick notes with this recovered material.

These pressure sensitive adhesives present processing difficulties to recycled paper makers. At

*continued on page 5*

## Desktop Products

	Product	Manufacturer	Brand	%TRC	%PC	Recyclable	Other	Available
	writing pads	FSC Paper Co. 708-389-8520		100%	100%	yes	contains groundwood	direct sales
✓	writing pads	House of Doolittle 800-621-9546	Eco-Tones	100%	20%	yes	ECF-soy ink	direct sales, distributors
✓	writing pads	TOPS 630-889-1249	Second Nature	50%	20%	yes		distributors
✓	writing pads	Riverside Paper, Co. 414-749-2200	Ecology	100%	35%	yes		direct sales, distributors
	writing pads	Avery Dennison 800-252-8379	Earthsmart	50%	10%	yes		office supply stores
✓	writing pads	Performance 800-458-7189	Performance Ultimate	100%	100%	yes	TCF	distributors
✓	index cards	Esselte America 516-741-3200	Earth wise	20%	20%	yes	ECF	distributors, office supply stores
✓	index cards	Riverside Paper 414-749-2200	Ecology	100%	35%	yes		direct sales, distributors
✓	desktop organizers	Newell Office Products 608-257-2227	Regeneration	25%	25%	yes		office supply stores
✓	self-stick notes	3M 800-342-7561	Post-its®	100%	20%	no		distributors, office supply stores
✓	pencils and pens	Sanford 800-323-0749	American Eco- Writer pencil	100%	60%	no		distributors, office supply stores
✓	pencils and pens	Amazing Recycled Products 800-241-2174	Blue jean pencil and Paper Money pencil	100%	80-90%	no		direct sales, distributors
	pencils and pens	GoodKind Pens 207-883-1250	Woody Pen	100%	0%	refillable	100% reclaimed manufacturer's waste, reusable packaging	direct sales, distributors
✓	pencils and pens	Amazing Recycled Products 800-241-2174	black ball point pen	100%	75-85%	refillable		direct sales, distribution
✓	diskettes	Green Disk 206-222-7734	Green Disk	100%	100% reclaimed disks	yes	all packaging recycled	office supply stores, distributors

%TRC = percentage total recycled content

%PC = percentage postconsumer content

✓ = Green Buy

© 1997, Green Seal, Inc. Use of this chart for commercial purposes is prohibited. Information in this table was confirmed by the manufacturer.

**TCF** = totally chlorine free; refers to papers where the virgin and recycled fiber components are unbleached or have been processed without chlorine or its derivatives in the manufacture of the current sheet. However, the recycled content may have been chlorine-bleached during its previous manufacturing cycles.

**ECF** = elemental chlorine free; refers to papers that have been processed using chlorine derivatives, such as hypochlorite or chlorine dioxide.

**Office Recycling**  
*continued from page 3*

present, these “stickies” are a contaminant to the making of fine grade recycled content papers and will degrade the value of otherwise acceptable recovered waste paper that it is mixed with. Green Seal recommends separating these notes from your office recycling system until this technical difficulty is overcome.

**Office Reuse**

A centralized office supply room can help a business reuse material. Employees can return unnecessary items to this area, where they can be reused by others. Materials can include everything from presentation supplies, computer disks, and binders, to furniture, telephones and wastebaskets. Encourage your co-workers to check this stockpile before ordering new supplies. A central supply room or cabinet

also saves money by eliminating separate departmental stashes.

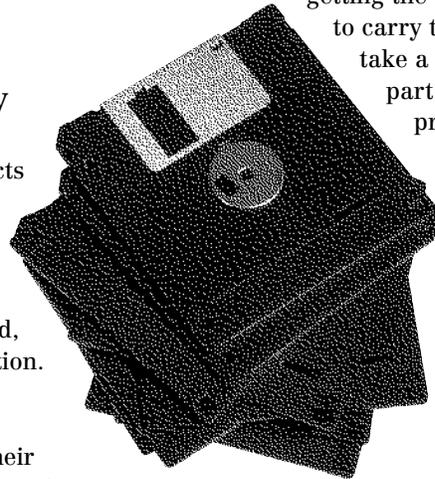
**Price and Availability**

We have noted where the products in the tables are available. Prices will vary based on the volume purchased, and on your location.

Sometimes, “green” products cost more than their conventional alternatives. This usually occurs because the products are manufactured by an emerging technology, thereby preventing the economies of scale, the products are inefficiently distributed, or true environmental costs are not reflected in the costs of conventional products.

Several of the manufacturers we

contacted to research this piece commented on the difficulty of getting the office super-stores to carry their goods. It may take a little work on your part to get these products but by building demand, the mass marketers will eventually take note.



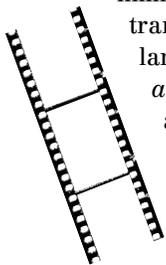
**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**  
“The Hummers, Inc.”, 210-232-6167  
Ecomall, [www.ecomall.com](http://www.ecomall.com)  
Recycled Office Products, Inc.  
800-814-1100  
Full Circle Paper Outlet  
919-309-0811  
GreenCo. Products, 800-326-2897

---

**ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**3M’s Transparency Film Recycling Program**

3M has developed a program aimed at diverting the roughly 15 million pounds of used transparency film annually landfilled. They will accept *any* manufacturers film and recycle the polyester flake. 3M’s transparencies are made with an average of 25% postconsumer polyester content that they purchase from the recovery firm processing the used transparencies. Most of their transparency coatings (which



allow the toner or ink to adhere and prevent the films from being recycled with soda bottles) are solvent free, drastically cutting down on VOCs emitted during production. Call 800-328-1371 for information and to request mailing labels.

**Mohawk Paper Mills “Options”**

Green Seal announces certification of a sixth Mohawk Paper Mills paper line — Mohawk Options. These papers either contain a minimum of 20% postconsumer fiber, or are manufactured without the use of

chlorine. The entire line also meets Green Seal requirements for product performance and packaging. For more information call Mohawk at 1-800-THE MILL.

**Oxy Clean Laundry Bleach**

Green Seal has certified Oxy Clean powdered laundry bleach, made by Oxy Company, Ltd. of Korea. This product meets Green Seal’s requirements for performance, low toxicity, biodegradability and reduced packaging. For a copy of Green Seal’s criteria for powdered laundry bleach, call (202) 331-7337.



1730 RHODE ISLAND AVE., NW  
SUITE 1050  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036-3101

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
WASHINGTON, DC  
PERMIT NO. 5515

---

## WHO IS GREEN SEAL?

*Green Seal's mission is to achieve significant environmental benefits by encouraging organizations and individuals to choose environmentally responsible products and services. We accomplish this goal in two key ways.*

*First, we set rigorous environmental standards for products and services and award a seal of approval to those meeting the standards. When consumers select products bearing the Green Seal, they know they are buying products that have a lessened impact on*

*the environment, without sacrificing performance.*

*Second, through our Green Seal Environmental Partners Program and the Choose Green Report, we help large and small institutions become environmentally sensitive shoppers. We provide detailed guidance — such as this report — on how organizations can protect the environment while saving money.*

*Please contact us to find out how to become a partner and receive our monthly newsletters.*

