KAISER PERMANENTE®

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Principles

This document is meant to convey to manufacturers and suppliers the importance Kaiser Permanente (KP) places on reducing the lifecycle environmental footprint of healthcare and improving overall public health. We count on suppliers and manufacturers to provide us with innovative, environmentally preferable solutions to meet our procurement needs, and expect them to complete our supplier disclosure process and provide us with honest and complete information on corporate social responsibility and product performance as it pertains to environmental and public health.

Specifically, we expect suppliers and manufacturers to:

- Design products to contain high post-consumer recycled content;
- Design products to be readily recycled, reprocessed, reused, and/or composted;
- Manufacture products that reduce total cost of ownership and improve end of life responsibility by incorporating “take-back” provisions;
- Manufacture products without harmful chemicals and materials as indicated by KP EPP Standards, and in accordance with national and international chemical and material standards;
- Implement programs to ensure products do not contain restricted or banned materials;
- Manufacture products that use minimal resources (e.g. energy, water) during normal operations, in order to reduce their environmental impacts;
- Transport and package units in minimal packaging that is recyclable, non-toxic and/or bio-based;
- Improve transport and production methods to reduce greenhouse gas emissions;
- Prevent accidental spills and releases of hazardous materials into the environment and reduce adverse environmental impacts on the local community;
- Develop due diligence frameworks and management systems to monitor and enforce enhance the sustainability of their own supply chain.

Statement

In support of KP's mission to improve the health of our members and the communities we serve, we are committed to applying the guidelines and specifications of Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) to all major, strategic, and critical purchasing decisions. KP's Sourcing Core Groups, supported by the Impact Spending and Environmental Stewardship staffs, evaluate environmental impacts (e.g., chemicals of concern, waste, energy use) in order to select products and services that are environmentally sound. KP expects suppliers and manufacturers to continuously develop price competitive quality products that conform to the EPP guidelines and specifications as defined in this document.

Specifically, products and services should:

- Use "**safer chemicals"**—chemicals that are inherently less hazardous than alternative chemicals and release minimal byproducts during their lifecycle.
- Promote the use of **renewable materials** by increasing the use of sustainable, bio-based materials, and reducing the use of fossil fuel-based materials.
- Support **healthy food systems** by sourcing food products that are local, seasonal, nutritious, and produced in a way that minimizes degradation to human and environmental health and vitality.
- Promote **land stewardship** by cultivating healthy ecosystems and protecting natural resources.
- Promote **sustainable energy** by using renewable energy sources and reducing energy use.
- Protect **clean air** by minimizing pollutants.
- Contribute to the availability of **clean water** by minimizing water use and pollution and by avoiding bottled water products where not clinically necessary.
- **Minimize waste** by using products that are reusable or recyclable, and made of recyclable materials.
- Use **environmentally sound waste disposal** technologies when reuse, reduction and recycling cannot be achieved.

Environmental Considerations for Purchasing

KP takes a precautionary approach to selecting the products and services we purchase and use. We acknowledge that federal and state regulations and standards do not always address critical issues concerning public and environmental health and are mindful of environmental and public health concerns brought to the forefront through independent and rigorous research. Therefore, KP is working to:

Avoid products containing the following chemicals and materials

- **Persistent bioaccumulative toxic chemicals (PBTs)—**Chemicals that are persistent in the environment, bioaccumulate in people and/or wildlife, and are toxic are called PBTs. As long as PBTs remain in commerce and may therefore be released into the environment, they pose risks to health of humans and biological systems**.** https://saferchemicals.org/get-the-facts/toxic-chemicals/persistent-bioaccumulative-and-toxic-chemicals-pbts/
- **Bisphenols—**chemicals produced in large quantities for use primarily in the production of polycarbonate plastics and epoxy resins. Bisphenol A, one of the most prevalent bisphenols, can leach into food from the protective internal epoxy resin coatings of canned foods and from consumer products such as polycarbonate tableware, food storage containers, water bottles, and baby bottles. Human exposure to BPA is widespread, which the National Institute of Health National Toxicology Program believes presents a risk to human developmental and reproductive health. https://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/ntp/ohat/bisphenol/bisphenol.pdf
- **Carcinogens, Mutagens and Reprotoxic chemicals (CMRs)**—CMRs are substances that are carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic to reproduction. They have inherent properties that can cause cancer, alter DNA or damage reproductive systems and are of specific concern due to the long term and serious effects that they may exert on human health.
- **Halogenated flame retardants**—Flame retardants (FR) are compounds that when added to manufactured materials, such as plastics and textiles, and surface finishes and coatings that inhibit, suppress, or delay the production of flames to prevent the spread of fire. Bromine, chlorine, fluorine and iodine, are the elements in the chemical group known as halogens. Halogenated flame retardants act directly on the flame, the core of the fire. Chlorine (chlorinated) and bromine (brominated) are both used in this role. These flame retardants have been shown through controlled studies in laboratory animals to disrupt thyroid function, critical for brain development early in life, and potentially suppress immune systems, cause cancer, and disrupt normal endocrine function.
- **Latex**—Latex is a common component of many medical and dental supplies. These include disposable gloves, dental dams, airway and intravenous tubing, syringes, stethoscopes, catheters, dressings and bandages. Latex also is found in many consumer products. Extensive use of this material can cause allergic reactions in healthcare personnel and patients.
- **Mercury**—Mercury is a naturally-occurring chemical element that exists in several forms: elemental (metallic) mercury; inorganic mercury compounds; and Methylmercury and other organic compounds. Mercury exposure at high levels can harm the brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, and immune system of people of all ages. High levels of methylmercury in the bloodstream of babies developing in the womb and young children may harm their developing nervous systems, affecting their ability to think and learn.

- **Perfluoroalkyl and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)**—PFAS are a group of chemicals used to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. PFAS may affect growth and development, reproduction, thyroid function, the immune system, and injure the liver.
- **Phthalates**—Phthalates are a family of industrial chemicals used mainly as softeners in polyvinyl chloride plastic and as solvents in consumer products. Phthalates, used in many industrial and consumer products, are of concern because of the evidence of pervasive human and environmental exposure. Diethylhexyl phthalate (DEHP) is the phthalate most commonly used in medical products. DEHP can leach out of flexible medical devices into the solution or medication contained therein and subsequently into the patient. Animal studies indicate that DEHP is a potential reproductive and development toxicant.
- **Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)** —PVC is a versatile, high-volume, synthetic material with many different formulations and configurations. It is commonly used in building materials (e.g., flooring, pipes, carpet backing, and wall coverings), office furniture, and various healthcare products (e.g., PVC-based IV bags, blood bags, urine bags, tubing, oxygen masks, catheters, and disposable gloves). Concerns about the hazards of PVC chemicals are associated with its entire life cycle – from production to disposal – including additives, like DEHP, required to impart various performance characteristics.
- **Proposition 65 Chemicals**—Proposition 65 requires businesses to provide warnings to Californians about significant exposures to chemicals that cause cancer, birth defects or other reproductive harm. Proposition 65 also prohibits California businesses from knowingly discharging significant amounts of listed chemicals into sources of drinking water.
- **Volatile organic compounds and semi-volatile organic compounds**—These are “any compound of carbon, excluding carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, carbonic acid, metallic carbides or carbonates, and ammonium carbonate, which participates in atmospheric photochemical reactions” (US EPA Code of Federal Regulations 40 CFR 51.100). Volatile organic compounds have a high vapor pressure and low water solubility. Many VOCs are human-made chemicals that are used and produced in the manufacture of paints, pharmaceuticals, and refrigerants. VOCs are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids and may have short- and long-term adverse health effects.

Appendix

Definitions

- **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing** is the purchase of products and services whose environmental impacts have been found to be less damaging to the environment and human health than competing products and services.
- **Life-cycle** refers to the environmental and public health implications of all phases of a product's existence from raw material extraction/production, to manufacture, distribution, use, and disposal, and includes all intervening transportation.
- **Sourcing Core Groups** are teams of Kaiser Permanente physicians and employees facilitated who, in conjunction with purchasing personnel, ensure that clinical and business requirements, such as environmental criteria, become part of the request for proposal (RFP) process. Each team is responsible for setting weighted criteria and, through a team vote, deciding which supplier/products are recommended for contracting.
- **Take Back Provisions** encompass the ability to return items for credit, re-use, and disposal such as the return of mercury sphygmomanometers, fluorescent lights, shipping containers and packaging etc.

Responsibilities

This document is maintained by Kaiser Permanente's Impact Spending team's Director of Sustainable Sourcing.

Maintenance

This document is reviewed bi-annually to assure continuing relevance and revised as necessary.

References

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- California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment https://www.p65warnings.ca.gov/
- Cal/EPA, ARB list of Toxic Air Contaminants (TACs). The current version of this list is accessible at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/carb-identified-toxic-air-contaminants

- Cal/EPA OEHHA Safe Drinking Water and Toxic Enforcement Act or 1986 (Proposition 65). The current versions of these lists are accessible at https://oehha.ca.gov/proposition-65
- Cal/EPA OEHHA list of chemicals with noncancer chronic Reference Exposure Levels (RELs). The current version of this list is accessible at https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/documents/consolidated-table-oehha-carb-approved-risk-assessment-health-values
- Federal Trade Commission (FTC) Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/grnrule/guides980427.htm
- Health Care Without Harm http://www.hcwh.org/us
- ISO 14020—Environmental Labels and Declarations—General Principles

  http://www.iso.org/iso/en/ISOOnline.frontpage
- ISO 14021—Environmental Labels and Declarations—Self-declared Environmental Claims (Type II Environmental Labeling http://www.iso.org/iso/en/ISOOnline.frontpage
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