

Paper and Printing Guide

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Introduction

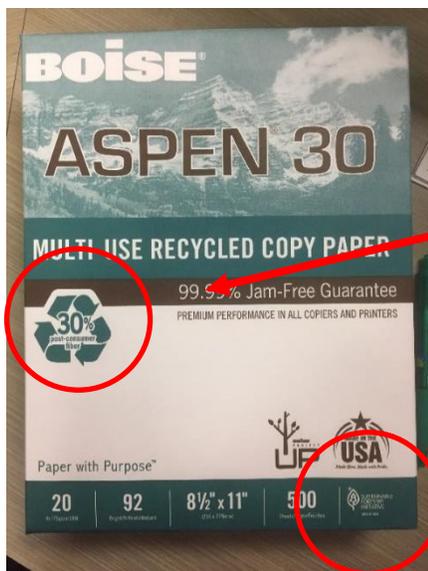
Washington University spends over \$6,000,000 on copier paper every year and generates thousands of pounds of printer paper. In addition, thousands of dollars are spent on creating customized printed materials that are produced at area copy centers and print shops. Shifting purchasing practices and seeking vendors who share our sustainability goals impacts the market and the health of the environment. This guide will assist decision-makers positioned to select environmentally preferable materials and vendors. Following the recommendations of this guide qualifies green-certified offices for as many as 10 points on the green office checklist.

Buying Paper - Recycled Content Labeling

Paper made with recycled content uses fewer freshly felled trees than virgin paper, helping to slow deforestation. Your paper's packaging should advertise a specific percentage of either pre-consumer or post-consumer recycled content. What's the difference?

Pre-consumer recycled content: This paper is made from waste generated during production, such as from wood scraps that end up on the factory floor. Recycling this pre-consumer material is a common practice that allows a company to use materials efficiently.

Post-consumer recycled content: This paper is made from waste generated after use from a consumer, such as from the sheet of paper you toss in your office recycling bin, that has been captured through a recycling program. Recycling programs only work if there is a strong market for the materials that are collected and sorted. Giving preference to products with post-consumer waste encourages manufactures to source their raw materials from recycling centers rather than virgin forests.



Buying Paper - Sustainable Certifications



Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) – The Forest Stewardship Council is an independent organization that has established criteria “to promote environmentally sound, socially beneficial and economically prosperous management of the world's forests.” For more description on the specific criteria, see [here](#).

If a paper is FSC certified, it has received a “Chain of Custody” certification, meaning that every company involved in the paper’s production, from the harvesters to distributors, has achieved FSC certification. The paper has been produced responsibly throughout the entire supply chain.



Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) – The Sustainable Forestry Initiative is an independent organization that has identified criteria for sustainable forestry management, including “measures to protect water quality, biodiversity, wildlife habitat, species at risk and forests with exceptional conservation value.” Unlike an FSC certification, SFI does not incorporate social and economic responsibility, but instead focuses on environmental responsibility.

If a paper is SFI certified, it contains raw materials from an SFI certified forest, a non-certified forest that follows SFI standards, or from recycled content. For more details of the criteria and various labels, see [here](#).



The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) – The PEFC is an international, nonprofit, umbrella organization that establishes criteria for responsible forestry management based on the input of international governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders. The organization also endorses national certification systems.

If a paper is PEFC certified, it is sourced from forests that meet the PEFC standards for social, economic, and environmental responsibility. Many forests that meet PEFC standards also meet those of FSC. For more details on the specific criteria, see [here](#).

Sustainable Green Printing Partnership (SGP) – The SGP is an independent organization that certifies entire printing facilities for meeting rigorous standards on material sourcing, energy, emissions, waste, and education efforts. Fewer than 50 printing facilities in the US are SGP certified. For more information on the criteria and certified printing services, see [here](#).

Purchasing Paper through the WashU MarketPlace

1. Log into MarketPlace here: <https://fishelp.wustl.edu/Pages/Marketplace.aspx>
2. Go to the Office Supply Catalogue search engine.
3. Enter “__% recycled copy paper,” with the percentage of post-consumer recycled content desired. We recommend 30% at minimum. The more recycled content the better!

Toner and Ink Cartridge

WashU participated in an automatic substitution program through Office Essentials and the WashU Market Place. Double check to make sure you are saving money and resources by only purchasing refilled toner cartridges. Cartridges of any kind can be easily recycled by putting them in a box labeled OE toner return and setting them out for pick up during office supply delivery. For more information, a step-by-step guide can be found [here](#).

Out-of-Office Printing

There are a range of printing services around St. Louis that each offer unique benefits in cost, accessibility, and services offered. But any print job requires energy and material consumption and generates waste – how can you reduce your environmental footprint when printing out of office?

- Right-size your print job. Make sure you are only ordering as many items as you need and no more. If you re-order frequently, track wastage of the last round and adjust the number of copies your order accordingly. Supplement with digital copies to reduce the number of print copies needed.
- Request paper with **recycled content** or **FSC, SFI, or PEFC certification**.
- Ask if **vegetable-based inks** can be used for your order. These inks break down more easily than petroleum-based inks and allow paper to be recycled more easily, but they may not be suitable for all print jobs.
- Be sure that your company uses **digital printing**, which generates less waste than traditional offset printing. Few companies don't offer digital printing services today.
- Use a company that has earned a **sustainable certification**, such as SGP. While certified paper ensures that a company's materials are sustainably sourced, a certified company ensures that all practices, from the production of materials to the printing process to deliveries, meet specific criteria.

The following companies have been identified as preferred print vendors and copy centers by WashU's Resource Management Department. We checked in with each company to confirm their environmentally-preferable offerings.

FedEx Office

- Almost all paper offered is **FSC certified**.
- A variety of recycled-content options are available, ranging from 10% to 100%
- FedEx offers the Tree Frog Brand, made with 100% recycled content paper. **Ask for the "100% recycled" or the "pure white" paper.**
- The most common papers used by WashU (80 lb. for cardstock, 24 lb. for color, and standard white for B&W) are all FSC certified.

Minuteman Press

- All paper offered is **FSC certified**.
- Minuteman uses only **vegetable based inks**.
- The company sets its minimum wage well above state law, at \$17/hour.

Hi-Tech Copy Center

- Hi-Tech offers varying percentages of **post-consumer recycled content paper**, including 30%.
- The company uses 20 lb. white as the default paper, which is **FSC certified**.

MADCO Printing

- All paper contains post-consumer recycled content, **ranging from 70-100%**.
- The company uses only **vegetable based inks**.

STL Print Group

- STL Print Group is both **FSC and SFI certified**.
- The company offers a variety of paper with post-consumer recycled content and/or FSC certification.
- The most common papers used by WashU are **"flat sheet" and "accent opaque white."** Flat sheet contains 30% post-consumer recycled content, while accent opaque white is FSC certified.
- **Vegetable-based inks** are used on most print jobs; they're always used on flat sheet paper.

More to come...

The Green Office Team will continue to seek out and interview companies that offer specialized print services that meet our sustainability criteria. Stay tuned for a more comprehensive list. Do you have a favorite local printer? Send suggestions that you would like to see on this list to sustainability@wustl.edu.