



ENVIRONMENTAL SPECIFICATION GUIDANCE FOR TONER & INK CARTRIDGES

The District of Columbia is committed to procuring quality goods and services in a timely manner and at a reasonable cost that support the District in meeting its sustainability goals. Compliance with specification guidance is sufficient to meet PPRA Section 1101(a) environmentally preferable procurement requirements. This additional information provides context, as well as supplemental information on take-back services, that, although recommended, is not required for compliance with PPRA 1101(a). To access solicitation documents with full contract language, [click here](#).



BENEFITS

Remanufactured cartridges typically cost **30 – 60%** less than new cartridges on a per-copy basis

Every pound of material used in remanufactured cartridges saves **5 – 9** pounds of virgin material

SOURCES

<https://www.stopwaste.org/resources/epp-fact-sheet-remanufactured-toner-cartridges>

Scope

The environmental specification addresses black inkjet cartridges, laser cartridges, and other toner cartridges for copiers, printers, multi-function devices, and fax machines.

NOTE: The specifications for copiers, printers, multi-function devices, and fax machines can be found under [Imaging Equipment](#).

COPY AND PASTE THE FOLLOWING SPECIFICATION LANGUAGE INTO THE REQUIREMENTS SECTION OF YOUR STATEMENT OF WORK

EPPS Requirements

Black toner cartridges purchased by the District of Columbia shall meet the environmental criteria defined below.

Remanufactured Cartridges:

Toner cartridges procured by the District shall be remanufactured. Remanufacturing shall be done by companies that are certified by the Standardized Test Methods Committee (STMC) of the International Imaging Technology Council (I-ITC).

Ink:

Contractors shall use vegetable-based or soy-based ink that meets the requirements of the Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1994.



Supplementary Recommendations



To further improve the environmental performance of ink and toner cartridges purchased by the District of Columbia beyond the minimum

requirements of the environmental specification guidance, purchasers should consider adopting the supplementary recommendations defined below.

Provision of Toner Cartridge Take-Back Service

The Contractor shall offer the District of Columbia an effective and reliable means of returning empty toner cartridges for remanufacturing and/or recycling on request. This service may be provided by the contractor, manufacturer, or a third party. Notification of the take-back service, including how to utilize the service, shall be available to the purchaser at time of purchase through written or online documentation.

Ink

Soy-based ink shall contain at least the following percentages of soy oil as specified by the American Soybean Association:

1. 30% for colored news inks
2. 40% for black news inks
3. 20% for business forms inks
4. 20% for sheet-fed inks
5. 7% for heat-set inks

Additional Information

STMC is a committee organized by the [International Imaging Technology Council](#) (I-ITC) to identify and promote selected standardized test methods for the printer cartridge industry. The selected test methods are used to evaluate remanufactured toner printer cartridge performance to assure that remanufactured cartridges have the same performance characteristics as OEM cartridges, thereby eliminating a common reason for choosing OEM cartridges over remanufactured cartridges. A company that is STMC certified is one that has had their employees successfully trained by an authorized trainer in these test methods, attests to using these test methods, and has purchased the correct test equipment.

Vegetable-based inks use vegetable oil in place of petroleum. These inks are less toxic than petroleum-based inks, releasing fewer volatile organic compounds (VOCs) into the environment. Additionally, vegetable-based inks use renewable resources in place of non-renewable petroleum. The [Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1994](#) sets requirements for the Federal government for the minimum allowable vegetable-based content in printing inks, which are noted above for this specification.

Environmental Hotspots The most important environmental benefits associated with this specification

MATERIALS USE/ SUSTAINABLE SOURCING

By reusing components, remanufacturing toner cartridges significantly reduces the use of raw materials. For every pound of new material used in remanufacturing, five to nine pounds of virgin materials are conserved. Vegetable-based inks use renewable materials in place of non-renewable petroleum.

RECYCLED CONTENT

By reusing components, remanufacturing toner cartridges significantly reduces the use of raw materials. For every pound of new material used in remanufacturing, five to nine pounds of virgin materials are conserved.

POLLUTANTS/TOXICITY/ HEAVY METALS

Vegetable-based inks release fewer VOCs than petroleum-based inks. VOCs reduce indoor air quality and can cause a range of adverse health effects from respiratory irritation to cancer.



Significance to the District

PPRA [PPRA § 104](#) specifies that products meet Default Environmental Standards. U.S. EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines which recommends use of remanufactured toner cartridges, is a Default Environmental Standard (DES).

LEED FOR EXISTING BUILDINGS: O&M This specification meets the requirements of LEED v4 EBOM. [The LEED's Materials and Resources: "Purchasing – ongoing" credit](#) requires at least 60% of total purchases of ongoing consumables (by cost) meet at least one specified criterion. The criteria include, but are not limited to, requiring toner cartridges for laser printers to be remanufactured. To gain one point for this credit, electric-powered equipment must meet a separate list of criteria.

LEGISLATION This specification supports compliance with the [Vegetable Ink Printing Act of 1994](#) which sets requirements for the Federal government for the minimum allowable vegetable-based content in printing inks. Inks should contain at least the following percentages of vegetable oil for compliance:

1. News ink, 40%
2. Sheet-fed ink, 20%
3. Forms ink, 20%
4. Heat-set ink, 10%

For more information about sustainable specification guidance or the District's Sustainable Purchasing Program, please visit: <https://ocp.dc.gov/page/sustainable-purchasing-program> or call the OCP Procurement Center of Excellence at: [202.724.4477](tel:202.724.4477) or email sppdc@dc.gov.