

How to Apply Third-Party Environmental Certifications Supplemental Job Aid 1.0

Date: August 13, 2019

Target Audience: Department Buyer, Department Advanced Buyer, and Department Purchase Order (PO) Processor

Purpose: The purpose of this supplemental job aid is provides basic instructions on how to purchase environmentally responsibly by choosing products with third-party environmental certifications.

1.0 Introduction:

In order to designate a purchase as Environmentally Preferable (EPP), the purchase must fulfill one or more of the following criteria:

1. Acquired through an EPP Item
2. Meet a DGS purchasing standard
3. Include third-party environmental certifications
4. Include the availability of a take-back program
5. Be State Agency Buy Recycled Campaign (SABRC) compliant
6. Get recorded in FI\$Cal as EPP

2.0 What are Third-Party Environmental Certifications?

Third-party certifications involve independent assessments declaring that specified requirements have been met. Certification programs can provide an official certification mark or a declaration of conformity.

The EPP Program specifically addresses those third- party certifications that are environmental. To differentiate environmental certifications from all certifications, the EPP Program uses the term Third-Party Environmental Certifications.

To assist state departments with the identification of third-party environmental certifications that will meet EPP criteria, the Department of General Services EPP Program has developed the [DGS Third-Party Environmental Certification Matrix](#).

The matrix identifies applicable third-party environmental certifications, by commodity. When a purchase holds a certification from this matrix, the purchase is considered EPP.

3.0 When to Choose Products with Third-Party Environmental Certifications:

Choose products with third-party environmental certifications whenever one is available and meets the state's needs.

4.0 How to Select a Product with a Third-Party Environmental Certification:

1. Navigate to the DGS Third-Party Environmental Certification Matrix. Locate a third-party environmental certification that applies to the products you are purchasing.
 - a. If there is an applicable third-party environmental certification, proceed to Step 2.
 - b. If there is not, you can still look for other ways to buy green, such as incorporating take-back availability and/or SABRC.
2. Identify the products that are labeled with the third-party environmental certification and best meet your needs.
3. Select a purchasing mechanism for the identified products.
4. Record the third-party environmental certification the product has in FI\$Cal. See Job Aid: *How to Record EPP/SABRC in FI\$Cal*.

When making a purchase, departments must adhere to all applicable laws, regulations, policies, best practices, and purchasing authority requirements, e.g. California Codes, California Code of Regulations, State Administrative Manual, Management Memos, and State Contracting Manual Volume F, 2 and 3, as applicable.

5.0 How to Record Applied DGS Purchasing Standards in FI\$Cal:

If purchasing an EPP Item, third-party environmental certifications will automatically be applied to your purchase. No further action to incorporate third-party environmental certifications into your purchase is required.

If applying a DGS purchasing standard to the purchase, it is necessary to record the applied third-party environmental certification in FI\$Cal.

If applying third-party environmental certifications to the products, record up to three third-party environmental certifications per product.

6.0 References & Resources:

Buying Green Guide DGS publishes a best practices manual, the [Buying Green Guide](#). The guide provides state buyers and suppliers with a single source of up-to-date EPP contracts, DGS purchasing standards, bid specifications, and buying tips. It also provides access to laws, regulations and standards that shape procurements and provides transparency to the work DGS does.

The EPP FI\$Cal job aids are a comprehensive “how-to” series that provides detailed instructions on how to buy green and how to record those purchases in FI\$Cal. Visit the Buying Green website to access the full series:

1. How to Purchase Through an EPP Item
2. How to Apply DGS Purchasing Standards
3. How to Apply Third-Party Environmental Certifications
4. How to Include Take-Back
5. How to Apply State Agency Buy Recycled Campaign (SABRC)
6. How to Record EPP/SABRC in FI\$Cal

Contact the Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Program with Buying Green questions by emailing buygreen@dgs.ca.gov.