Sustainable Purchasing Action Steps

1. Assess the Need

Ask yourself...
- Can you avoid the purchase?
- Can you repurpose what you have?
- Can you get it secondhand from Buff Surplus or another department?

2. Use Ecolables

Look for the “Eco Option” Indicator on Marketplace. Ecolabels tell you if a product is certified as having met environmental and social standards. Look for:
- Made with recycled content
- Recyclable/compostable
- Reusable or durable
- Low: toxicity, VOCs, energy, or water use
- Biobased

3. Employ Life Cycle Cost Analysis (LCCA)

- When evaluating energy- and water-using products and systems, think about the entire life cycle costs and environmental impacts.
- For example: when purchasing an ultra-low freezer for a laboratory, consider the initial financial cost to purchase the freezer, how much the energy will cost over the entire time of use, the cost of necessary repairs over the entire life span, and finally, the cost to dispose of the freezer at the end of its life.

4. Reduce Shipping Waste

Try to:
- Purchase in bulk or combine orders
- Recycle packaging
- Choose standard shipping, not overnight
- Choose local suppliers

5. Extend the Longevity of the Stuff You Buy
Could Another Department Use this?

6. Disposal

When you’re done with something:
- Reuse items, or give to another department
- Compost or recycle
- Send back to the supplier, when applicable
- Dispose of hazardous waste correctly

Next Steps

Sustainable Purchasing Guidelines [2]

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