



Can Liners

Suggested Environmental Considerations/Requirements for RFP's/RFI's

Please consider asking the suggested environmental questions in the RFP/RFI process for Can Liners to inform the decision making process. These questions offer guidance on the applicable environmental considerations for can liners. The preferred answer to each question is "Yes". If you have questions or comments, please email GSC@practicegreenhealth.org.

#	Suggested RFP Language ("Yes" is the preferred answer)	Consideration/Requirement Definition	Notes
1	Does the product contain a minimum of 10% postconsumer recycled content and therefore meets EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines? (Y/N)	Trash liners are commonly made with recycled content. Postconsumer recycled content means the percentage of materials that were collected after consumer use and used back/recycled in the manufacturing process. Postconsumer content differs from preconsumer (sometimes referred to as postindustrial) content. Preconsumer content is the percentage of materials recycled from manufacturing waste - materials that never made it to the consumer. ¹ EPA guidelines recommend a minimum of 10% postconsumer content in liners.	For a list of EPA's Comprehensive Procurement Guidelines, see http://www.epa.gov/waste/consERVE/tools/cpg/products/index.htm . Some manufacturers are making bags using less plastic as opposed to using recycled content. We have not determined what minimum thickness would be considered as a "source reduced" product so have not included this consideration at this time.
2	Does this product's primary package contain postconsumer recycled content? (Y/N)	For fiber based materials, EPA guidelines recommend at least 45% postconsumer fiber but we have not suggested an amount since the material content (fiber, plastic, etc) is unknown.	Use of postconsumer recycled content supports recycling and closing the loop. EPA offers a calculator to calculate the environmental savings from purchasing recycled content items, http://epa.gov/epawaste/consERVE/tools/warm/ReCon_home.html

3	Is the product, including the printed inks, dyes, pigments or stabilizers (or any other additives), free of intentionally added heavy metals - lead, mercury, cadmium and hexavalent chromium? (Y/N/NA)	Some trash bags contain pigmented products that could be toxic to humans and the environment. Of special concern is the presence of heavy metals, such as cadmium and lead.	Lead, cadmium, mercury and hexavalent chromium are restricted by state law in nineteen U.S. states prohibiting the use of these metals in packaging or packaging components.
5	Does this product contain a percentage of biobased materials? (Y/N) If yes, please indicate the percentage.	The USDA Biopreferred Program requires federal agencies to purchase products with biobased content (or recycled content as recommended by EPA). It suggests that films used to make bags may contain 45-85% biobased materials. Suppliers of biobased products should provide proof of tensile strength.	The federal Biopreferred Program lists can liners and suggests a minimum biobased content of 85% in non-durable films and 45% in semi-durable films. Semi-durable would be better suited to hospital environments. Note a percentage of biobased content may not mean the product is environmentally preferable. Other content should be known.
6	<i>(Ask the following question if composting of bags and bag contents is a desired outcome)</i> Is this product certified as “commercially” compostable and meets the requirements of ASTM D6400 or EN 14995? (Yes/No)	Certified compostable means the product will fully and safely biodegrade in a commercial-scale compost facility in a specific number of days. Look for products that are certified by one or more of the following organizations to meet ASTM standards: Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI), Din Certo (European Union), AIB Vincotte Inter (Belgium), Australian Environmental Labeling Association (Australia) or Biodegradable Bioplastics Association (Japan).	Compostable liners are effective for the collection of green (yard/lawn) and food waste or other materials that are intended to be commercially composted. Materials sent to landfill generally do not degrade due to the lack of sun and water. ⁱⁱ For a list of BPI certified bags, see http://products.bpiworld.org/companies/category/bags

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ⁱ Green-Buildings.com, Postconsumer versus Preconsumer Recycled Content, viewed June 2015, <http://www.green-buildings.com/articles/post-consumer-vs-pre-industrial-recycled-content-whats-the-difference/>

ⁱⁱ Rathje, William, The Archeology of Contemporary Landfills, American Antiquity, Vol 57., No. 3 (July 1992) 437-447

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