

## Reduce, reuse, recycle

### Buying Recycled

Creating a strong market for recycled products is key to completing the recycling process or "closing the loop." Consumers close the loop when they purchase products made from recycled materials. Governments can promote buying recycled products through their own purchasing programs and guidelines. Manufacturers can participate as well by using recycled materials in their products.

#### Identifying Recycled-Content Products

Product labels can be confusing to consumers interested in buying recycled because of the different recycling terminology used. The following definitions might help clarify any uncertainty regarding manufacturers' claims. For more detailed guidance, view a summary of the Federal Trade Commission's brochure [Sorting Out Green Advertising Claims](#) or their [Official Guidance](#) for the use of environmental marketing claims.

- Recycled-content products are made from materials that would otherwise have been discarded. Items in this category are made totally or partially from material destined for disposal or recovered from industrial activities-like aluminum soda cans or newspaper. Recycled-content products also can be items that are rebuilt or remanufactured from used products such as toner cartridges or computers.
- Postconsumer content refers to material from products that were used by consumers or businesses and would otherwise be discarded as waste. If a product is labeled "recycled content," the rest of the product material might have come from excess or damaged items generated during normal manufacturing processes-not collected through a local recycling program.
- Recyclable products can be collected and remanufactured into new products after they've been used. These products do not necessarily contain recycled materials and only benefit the environment if people recycle them after use. Check with your local recycling program to determine which items are recyclable in your community.

There are more than 4,500 recycled-content products available, and this number continues to grow. In fact, many of the products we regularly purchase contain recycled-content. The following list presents just a sampling of products that can be made with recycled content:

- Aluminum cans
- Car bumpers
- Carpeting
- Cereal boxes
- Comic books
- Egg cartons
- Glass containers
- Laundry detergent bottles
- Motor oil
- Nails
- Newspapers
- Paper towels
- Steel products
- Trash bags

<http://www.epa.gov/msw/buyrec.htm>