

# NERC

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## *Northeast Recycling Council, Inc.*

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### **How to Find & Buy Green Computers & Monitors**

Did you know that finding a green computer is just a click away? The new EPEAT<sup>®</sup> product registry ([www.epeat.net](http://www.epeat.net)) contains more than 100 computer desktops, monitors and notebook computers that meet minimum environmental performance criteria for toxicity, energy use, recycled content, design for recycling, and more. The EPEAT<sup>®</sup> product registry is simple to use, and allows you to narrow your search by manufacturer (including HP, Dell, Apple, Lenovo, and NEC), environmental performance criteria and performance tiers (bronze, silver and gold). The U.S. EPA sponsored the development of EPEAT<sup>®</sup>, also known as the Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool.

Through a grant from EPA New England and Region 3, the Northeast Recycling Council, Inc. (NERC) will help businesses, institutions, and government agencies to purchase green computers and monitors by providing technical assistance, outreach, and education to support the use of EPEAT<sup>®</sup>.

The NERC project will also quantify the environmental benefits of green electronics procurement by applying the EPA-funded Electronics Environmental Benefits Calculator (the EEBC), to provide a demonstration of the environmental benefit of actual and projected purchases of EPEAT-qualified products. The calculation of environmental benefits will include reduction in toxic materials, energy use, CO<sup>2</sup>/greenhouse gas emissions, municipal and hazardous solid waste generation; and increase in use of post-consumer content recycled materials.

**For more information about using EPEAT<sup>®</sup>, for technical assistance, or for information about upcoming informational teleconferences, contact Patty Dillon, NERC, at [patty@nerc.org](mailto:patty@nerc.org).**

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## Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool

Assisting Purchasers - Rewarding Leading Designs

### EPEAT<sup>®</sup> IS A PURCHASING TOOL

The Electronic Product Environmental Assessment Tool (EPEAT<sup>®</sup>) is an easy-to-use evaluation tool that allows the comparison and selection of computers and monitors based upon environmental attributes, in addition to cost and performance considerations. EPEAT<sup>®</sup>-registered products meet minimum performance standards in areas such as energy efficiency, toxicity reduction, and material selection. EPEAT<sup>®</sup> standards are currently available for computer desktops, monitors, and notebook computers.

EPEAT<sup>®</sup> was accepted as an American National Standard in April 2006: IEEE 1680, Standard for Environmental Assessment of Personal Computer Products, including Notebook Personal Computers, Desktop Personal Computers, and Personal Computer Monitors. EPEAT<sup>®</sup> is now the preferred method of product environmental assessment for computer products for federal agencies.

### PURCHASING EPEAT<sup>®</sup>-REGISTERED COMPUTER PRODUCTS

EPEAT<sup>®</sup> simplifies the process of purchasing environmentally preferable computer products by:

- Defining **specific environmental attributes** for computer systems. For purchasers, this eliminates the complex and time-consuming process of deciding what constitutes a “green” computer and how to evaluate bid responses.
- Providing a **searchable database of EPEAT<sup>®</sup>-registered products** that purchasers can use to survey the market to determine product availability.
- Establishing an **evaluation and verification system** to assure purchasers that the product meets the EPEAT<sup>®</sup> standard. Purchasers only need to verify that a product is in the EPEAT<sup>®</sup> database of registered products, and leave the evaluation and verification process to the EPEAT<sup>®</sup> organization, the Green Electronics Council.
- Offering a **three-tier rating system** that allows organizations to select equipment that meets minimum performance criteria or to give preference to models with additional environmental attributes by specifying a higher EPEAT<sup>®</sup> qualification level.

### HOW EPEAT<sup>®</sup> WORKS

The EPEAT<sup>®</sup> system evaluates computer products according to three tiers of environmental performance – Bronze, Silver, and Gold. The complete set of criteria includes 23 required and 28 optional criteria in eight (8) performance categories:

- Reduction/Elimination of Environmentally Sensitive Materials
- Materials Selection
- Design for End of Life
- Life Cycle Extension
- Energy Conservation
- End of Life Management

- Corporate Performance
- Packaging

To qualify for EPEAT<sup>®</sup> registration, a product must conform to all the required criteria. A manufacturer can choose among the optional criteria to boost its EPEAT<sup>®</sup> total “score” to achieve a higher-ranking level as follows.

- **Bronze:** Product meets all required criteria
- **Silver:** Product meets all required criteria plus at least 14 optional criteria
- **Gold:** Product meets all required criteria plus at least 21 optional criteria

A complete list of EPEAT<sup>®</sup> performance criteria is available on the EPEAT<sup>®</sup> web site (<http://www.epeat.net>).

The assessment tool is structured to allow manufacturers to self-declare, via a web-based interface, that their specific products meet EPEAT<sup>®</sup> requirements. A manufacturer must sign a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Green Electronics Council (GEC), before it can register products. The MOU commits them to provide accurate product and company information, and provides for remedies should inaccuracies be discovered. For each criterion, producers must, upon request of the GEC, provide verification data in order to substantiate EPEAT<sup>®</sup> conformance. To ensure that the self-declaration system functions in a transparent and verifiable manner, the GEC will randomly select a subset of registered products each year to verify their qualification.

The EPEAT<sup>®</sup> product database allows purchasers to search for EPEAT<sup>®</sup>-registered products by manufacturer, model, and EPEAT<sup>®</sup> qualification level (that is, Bronze, Silver, or Gold.)

### **QUANTIFYING THE ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS OF EPEAT<sup>®</sup> PURCHASES**

A calculator will soon be available to assist purchasers in estimating the environmental benefits of purchasing EPEAT<sup>®</sup>-registered products. This information can be used in the planning phase to justify EPEAT<sup>®</sup> purchases or periodically to document the results of purchasing EPEAT<sup>®</sup>-registered products. To run the calculator, only the number of EPEAT<sup>®</sup>-registered products purchased, and if possible, the number of products meeting each of the three EPEAT<sup>®</sup> rating tiers (bronze, silver, gold), will be needed. It is recommended that contracts require vendors to periodically report on the quantity of EPEAT<sup>®</sup>-registered products purchased to assist purchasers in documenting the results of efforts to purchase environmentally preferable computer equipment.

### **MODEL PROCUREMENT SPECIFICATION**

Sample language for use in procurement specifications is available on [www.epeat.net](http://www.epeat.net) to facilitate the adoption of EPEAT<sup>®</sup> as the preferred standard for purchasing computer products