

Green Glossary

Navigating the world of Green can be downright confusing. It's fraught with exotic acronyms and technical jargon. We hope this glossary of commonly used green terms will help lower anxiety levels, thereby reducing the amount of exhaled CO².

Biodegradable - The ability of a product or material to be decomposed by bacteria or other living organisms over time. Products that are not biodegradable, such as most plastics, create serious waste issues for the environment.

Carbon Footprint - A measurement of the impact that human actions have on the environment in terms of the amount of greenhouse gases produced. A carbon footprint is measured in units of carbon dioxide (CO²).

CFPA - CFPA stands for Chlorine Free Product Association. CFPA is an independent not-for-profit accreditation and standard setting organization. Its focus is promoting sustainable manufacturing practices, implementing advanced technologies free of chlorine chemistry, educating consumers on alternatives, and developing world markets for sustainably produced third party certified products and services.

Chain of Custody (CoC) - In the paper and print world, CoC is the flow of forest products throughout the supply chain, from the forest to the point of sale. CoC assures consumers that the wood they buy comes from certified forests.

CO² Emissions - Carbon dioxide is produced whenever fuel is burned and released into the air as one of the main producers of greenhouse gases, contributing significantly to global warming.

Consumption - The usage of a resource or the gradual destruction or depletion of resources over time.

Cottonseed - The seed that comes from cotton plants and is used to produce cottonseed oil, which is then used to make environmentally friendly ink.

ECF - ECF stands for elemental chlorine-free.

Eco-Footprint - Short for ecological footprint, this is a way to measure our impact on the environment. The measurement identifies how much individuals, organizations, cities, regions, nations, and humanity as a whole consume the resources nature provides, such as land, water, energy, etc.

Energy Efficient - The process of reducing power consumption and durability through various means such as technological innovation or speed.

Fiber - Used to make paper, fibers are small strands of wood, cotton, or other cellulose products.

Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) - An international, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting responsible management of the world's forests. The number of FSC-certified forests is growing rapidly, covering 84 million hectares worldwide—about 10% of the world's production forest.

Green - The act of placing an importance on ecological and environmental goals through socially responsible business and printing practices.

Green-e Certification - Recognizes products that are made through the use of renewable energy sources.

Green Purchasing - The action, selection, or purchase of goods or services based on how well they minimize harmful environmental impacts throughout their entire life cycle.

International Organization for Standardization (ISO) - An international standard for the control of environmental aspects of business and the improvement of environmental performance.

Linseed - A seed that comes from flax that is used to produce oil and environmentally friendly vegetable-based inks.

PCF - Stands for processed chlorine-free and is reserved for recycled content paper. This includes all recycled fibers used as a feedstock that meet EPA guidelines for recycled or post-consumer content. PCF papers have not been rebleached with chlorine containing compounds. A minimum of 30% post-consumer content is required.

PEFC - Stands for The Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification and is a European-based organization that promotes sustainably managed forests throughout the world and is supported by 149 global governments.

Petroleum (Petroleum-Based) - Petroleum is a general term applied to oil and oil products in all forms as a non-renewable resource. With regard to print, the term petroleum usually refers to oil-based products such as ink and lubricants.

Pollution - The introduction or presence of harmful substances into the environment that have dangerous effects on humans or other living things.

Post-Consumer Waste (PCW) - Describes papers generated from materials that have been separated from the solid waste stream and used again for making paper and packaging. Some PCW papers are generated entirely from recycled fibers while others are a mixture of virgin and recycled fibers.

Pre-Consumer Waste - Distinct from post-consumer content, pre-consumer content includes waste left over from converting and printing processes, prior to use by an end-consumer.

Recycled Content - When reporting recycled content, some manufacturers report total recycled content (combining pre- and post-consumer) while others report post-consumer only. Both pre-consumer and post-consumer recycled materials provide the environmental benefits of displacing virgin feedstocks. Using post-consumer content has the added benefit of providing markets for materials separated for recycling by consumers.

Recycling - Rather than discarding materials as waste, recycling is reusing them in their original or altered forms so that they may have a longer life and minimize environmental impact.

RoHS - A European Union standard that stands for Restriction of Hazardous Substances. RoHS limits the use of hazardous materials in electrical or electronic equipment.

SFI - SFI stands for Sustainable Forestry Initiative and is a single environmental protection standard that covers North American forestry supply chains and 135 million acres of forests.

Soy Inks (Soy-Based Inks) - A type of ink that is made from soybeans. When compared to a more traditional petroleum-based ink, soy inks are more environmentally friendly.

Solar Power - Using the sun's energy to generate electricity and hot water, and to heat, cool, and light buildings.

Sustainability - Actions, policies, and procedures that are capable of meeting the needs of the present without compromising the needs of the future, thus minimizing the long-term effects on the environment.

TCF - TCF stands for totally chlorine-free and is reserved for virgin fiber papers. TCF papers do not use pulp produced with chlorine or chlorine containing compounds as bleaching agents.

Totally Recycled Fiber (TRF) - A measurement of the complete amount of recycled fiber (pre- and post-consumer) that is used to make the paper or paper product.

Tree Free - Papers made from sources other than trees, such as flax, eucalyptus, hemp, java, bananas, cotton and more.

Triple Bottom Line - A company or organization's set of values and philosophies that incorporates three things: financial, social, and environmental performance as a way to measure their success and need for improvement.

UV - UV stands for ultraviolet light. There are certain types of inks and coatings that are energy curable. These inks and coatings are formulations that are printed as a paste or liquid and then immediately change to solid when exposed to ultraviolet light energy. Contrary to popular belief, pieces printed with UV ink are recyclable.

Virgin Paper - Paper that contains no recycled content and is made directly from the pulp of trees or, alternatively, cotton.

VOC - VOC stands for volatile organic compounds that are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids and have adverse environmental effects.