

Environmental Awareness

Fermilab is a participant in the Federal Electronics Challenge (FEC). The FEC is a voluntary partnership program that encourages federal facilities and agencies to:

- Purchase greener electronic products.
- Reduce impacts of electronic products during use.
- Manage obsolete electronics in an environmentally safe way

Used and obsolete electronics, such as computers, printers, mobile phones, and fax machines, are part of an increasing and complex waste stream that poses challenging environmental management problems for federal facilities. Electronic products contain a variety of hazardous constituents. Cathode ray tubes, circuit boards, batteries, and other electronic components often contain toxic materials such as lead, mercury, and cadmium. This growing and changing waste stream presents new challenges and responsibilities in designing and managing products to reduce the environmental impacts associated with each phase of the electronics life cycle—acquisition and procurement, operation and maintenance, and end-of-life management.

Many of the computers used onsite are ENERGY STAR qualified or have power saving features that turn off monitors and computers or put them into a “sleep” mode. This energy saving feature can use up to 70% less electricity than a computer/notebook without power management enabled.

Another way to accomplish the goals of the FEC is to buy EPEAT registered products. EPEAT is a system to help purchasers in the public and private sectors evaluate, compare and select desktop computers, notebooks and monitors (in the near future scanners, printers, faxes, etc) based on their environmental attributes. EPEAT also provides a clear and consistent set of performance criteria for the design of products, and provides an opportunity for manufacturers to secure market recognition for efforts to reduce the environmental impact of its products.

Some of the benefits of buying EPEAT registered products are:

- Save 13.7 billion kWh of electricity (enough to power 1.2 million U.S. homes for a year)
- Prevent 56.5 million metric tons of air emissions (including greenhouse gas emissions)
- Prevent 118,000 metric tons of water pollutant emissions
- Reduce the amount of toxic materials used by 1,070 metric tons
- Avoid the disposal of 41,100 metric tons of hazardous waste

You may not be directly involved in choosing your desktops, notebooks or monitors, but you may be able to help by choosing EPEAT products for your home. Those who are involved in making electronics purchases, please choose EPEAT products.

So let's do our part and save energy by using the energy star power saving modes on our electronics and purchase EPEAT products.