

A Greener Office- Adhesives

Source: The Green Office (www.thegreenoffice.com)

Tapes and glues have environmental impacts not necessarily obvious at first glance. Most tapes are made by bonding a sticky substrate to another material, which is almost never made from recycled content, usually a plastic. Glues come in several varieties (e.g white glue, super glue) and most contain environmentally damaging substances. Many non water-based glues use harmful petrochemical-based solvents that present environmental risks both during manufacturing and disposal. In use, these glues release dangerous VOCs that contribute to the degradation of indoor air quality.

Adhesive Type	Recommendation	Description
White Glue	Best	These all-purpose glues are generally water soluble and non-toxic. They also come in a variety of forms included liquid and stick, offering versatile gluing options.
Cellulose-based Tape	Best	Made from plant fiber, this tape easily biodegrades and is made from a renewable resource
Yellow Glue	Ok	Generally used for wood working related activities, some wood glues do not contain solvents or plasticizers.
Super Glue	Avoid Where Possible	The chemical name is ethyl cyanoacrylate and is a hazardous substance.
Rubber Cement	Avoid Where Possible	Essentially rubber dissolved in a solvent– high VOC content.

Best Practices

Things break and when they do it is often better to repair them than to throw them out– just make sure you do it with the environment in mind:

- Try using white glue if the job does not require an extra-strong bond.
- If white glue will not fit the bill, look for low VOC alternatives to traditional solvent-based adhesives.
- Avoid petrochemical-based tapes (e.g. duct tape) heavy duty bio-based options do exist.
- Remember that a little goes a long way– most tape jobs for shipping over do it.

