

Waste & Recycling

Part 3b – Material Fact Sheets

Paper and Cardboard

In most Districts/Cities: newspapers, magazines, greeting cards, packaging cardboard, egg boxes, telephone directories and office waste paper are recycled.

Wrapping paper can also be recycled, with the proviso it does not have glitter on it. (Glitter particles are plastics.) Also exclude cellophane.

What is Paper and Cardboard made from?

Paper and cardboard are made from cellulose fibre, most commonly pulped wood, although other organic, once-living plant materials can be used including rags, cotton, grasses, sugar cane, straw, waste paper and even elephant dung!

Paper is used for many things including writing paper, exercise books, hand towels, tissues, wrapping paper, newspapers, comics, magazines, cereal boxes, birthday cards, calendars, and packaging around toys, electrical appliances and other goods.

What Happens to Paper and Cardboard?

In our District/City, paper and cardboard can usually be recycled in three ways.

1) Via the kerbside recycling collections.

Paper and cardboard placed in either wheelie bins or clear recycling bags is taken to the transfer station.



Photo: Mixed bundles of cardboard placed out for collection with paper in bags at the kerbside, in this Hurunui example.

Sometimes tied bundles of paper and cardboard are left for collection (on the correct day). These are also taken to the transfer station, where string has to be removed.

2) Through the transfer stations.

Paper and cardboard can be recycled through all transfer stations.



Photo: Baled paper awaits transport to paper recycling mill.

3) Via the public recycling bins.

Paper and cardboard from the recycling bins is taken to the nearest transfer station and sorted into special containers for onward transport.

Once the City/District's paper and cardboard arrives at a central handling location, it is sorted and baled, ready to be sold in New Zealand and overseas to paper merchants for reprocessing into new paper and card.

Paper and Cardboard Recycling Facts

- On average, New Zealand households throw away 2-3 kg of paper a week; this includes plain paper, envelopes, junk mail, newspapers and magazines.
- Recycling one tonne of paper saves at least 30,000 litres of water and 3,000 to 4,000KWh electricity (enough for an average 3 bedroom house's lighting, TV and cooking for a year).
- Recycled paper produces 73% less air pollution than if it was made from raw materials.
- It takes 24 pine or spruce trees to make a single tonne of newsprint paper.

What about Reduction and Re-Use?

- Reduce the volumes of paper you receive by placing a 'No Junk Mail' sticker on your letter box.
- Reduce the volumes of paper used by ensuring printers and photocopiers print on BOTH sides of the paper and only print when necessary.
- Have a tray in each classroom for scrap paper, which can be used for notes or drawing.

- Re-use plain paper as a packaging material or for animal bedding - it only needs to be shredded.
- Reuse shredded paper and paper towels by composting it with manure and lawn mowings. Use gloves when handling used paper towels, for hygiene.
- Wet cardboard makes great mulch for trees, placed under chipped bark or gravel, or pinned in place.

What to Remember when Recycling Paper and Card

- When placing paper and cardboard direct in the recycling bins, ensure it is loose and not inside plastic bags.
- If recycling cardboard such as pizza boxes, always ensure it is clean and contains no bits of leftover food – otherwise compost it or you must treat it as landfill.
- Do not leave bags of paper or cardboard boxes next to the recycling bins or outside the transfer station gates, this is littering and makes a mess!
- Keep them dry.
- Remember that folders, plastic-laminated paper, plastic files and file binders are not recyclable.



Photo: Examples of recyclable paper and cardboard.

Class Challenges

1. Interview the school's caretaker to see what happens to paper and card from school and also ask if printers and copiers can print double sided (as 'default'?).
2. Design and display posters around the school to encourage everyone to re-use and recycle paper, and not bin it (or litter).
3. Keep the school's unwanted paper separate and weigh it at the end of a sample week and estimate from this how much is being thrown away each term or over a year and how much is or could be recycled.
4. After Christmas, bring unwanted cards in for recycling of the pictures as gift tags or as future greetings cards.
5. See if your school is eligible to join the Paper for Trees programme, (website: <https://www.paper4trees.co.nz/>) which rewards paper recycling at school with trees for the school to plant.

Further Resources

- www.spicerspaper.co.nz provides the story of paper, from where it comes from to how to recycle it.
- Visit www.recycle.co.nz for tips on recycling paper and cardboard.
- The website www.entirerecycling.co.uk provides great recycling information on recycling paper and card as well as other materials.