

Paper

- As the demand for paper has increased, more timber has been needed to meet the demand for wood pulp. A tree harvested for papermaking is soon replaced by another, so the cycle continues, but in some cases this has meant the loss of valuable wildlife habitats and ecosystems, as old forests have been replaced by managed plantations.
- Making new paper is energy intensive, because a lot of energy is required to pulp wood into paper.
- Paper makes up of 28% of an average household rubbish bag in Canterbury; much of that is recyclable.
- Unlike other recyclables, paper is a biodegradable material and when it goes to landfill it rots and produces methane, which is a potent greenhouse gas (20 times more potent than carbon dioxide).

The Recycling Process:

- Paper cannot be recycled indefinitely; it can only be recycled about 6 times, as the fibres get shorter and weaker each time.
- Some virgin pulp must be introduced into the recycling process to maintain the strength and quality of the fibre, so no matter how much we recycle we will never eradicate the need for virgin fibre.
- Recycled paper is not usually re-bleached and where it is, oxygen rather than chlorine is usually used. This reduces the amount of dioxins which are released into the environment as a by-product of the chlorine bleaching processes (used for new paper).
- Sometimes the ink is not removed from the paper when it is reprocessed. The ink is dispersed into the pulp, discolouring it slightly, which is why recycled paper can have a greyish tinge.
- If the paper is to be de-inked, this can be done by washing or flotation.
- Washing - As the paper is pulped, chemicals are added which separate the ink from the paper and allow it to be washed away in the large amounts of water used. (The water can then be cleaned and re-used.)
- Flotation - Air can be passed through the pulp, producing foam which will hold at least half of the ink and can be skimmed off.
- Although the de-inking process uses water and chemicals, it is still less harmful to the environment than the manufacturing process of new paper.
- Producing recycled paper requires between 28 - 70% less energy consumption than virgin paper.
- For every tonne of recycled paper used for recycling the savings include 30,000 litres of water, 3,000-4,000KWh of electricity (enough to run an average three bedroom house for one year), and 95% less polluting air emissions

Recycling

- Almost all paper can be recycled today, but some types are harder to recycle than others. Papers that are waxed, pasted, or gummed—or papers that are coated with plastic or aluminum foil—are usually not recycled because the process is too expensive.
- Even papers that are recycled are not usually recycled together. You shouldn't mix newspapers and cardboard boxes together for recycling.
- Old newspapers are usually made back into newsprint
- High-grade white office paper can be made into almost any new paper product—stationery, newsprint, or paper for magazines and books.
- Old corrugated boxes are made into new corrugated boxes or paperboard. Most cardboard boxes are a mixture of 50 percent new and 50 percent recycled fibres.
- Fibre from recycled telephone directories and yellow pages is being used to make egg cartons, cat litter, jiffy bags and animal bedding, among other things

Information from:

<http://www.recycle-more.co.uk/nav/page524.aspx>
www.wasteonline.org.uk