

Print and Paper The Facts

Paper is one of the most recycled products

In addition to the sustainable advantage of being made from a renewable resource, paper is one of the most recycled products in the world. Since we began tracking how much paper gets recycled back in 1990, the recovery rate for used paper has increased dramatically. We're not only recovering more, but we now know how to get the most environmental and economic benefits from using recycled paper in new products. Two Sides members support the implementation of effective recycling schemes and the minimization and eventual elimination of print and paper waste in landfills.



- One of the key environmental attributes of paper is that it can be easily recycled and used to make new products. In fact, paper is the most recycled material in the world today, with recovery rates ranging from 60 to 72% in North America and the EU. Over the next 15 years, paper for recycling is expected to grow from 43% to 61% of total global fibre supplies.¹
- The benefits of paper recycling include: extending the supply of wood fibre; reducing greenhouse gas emissions that can contribute to climate change by avoiding methane emissions [which are released when paper decomposes in landfills or is incinerated]; contributing to carbon sequestration; reducing the amount of energy needed to produce some paper products; and saving considerable landfill space.²
- More than 57 million tonnes of used paper are collected in Europe.³ The collection rate of paper for recycling is constantly increasing, exceeding 60% every year since 2005.⁴ Main sources of paper collection: 50% from trade and industry, 40% from households, and 10% from offices. Future potential: mainly households and offices, as the industrial sources are already utilised to a large extent.⁵
- "Paper has always been recycled to produce new paper. The growth in collection was initially modest and varied greatly between countries in Europe. Paper recycling boomed in the 1990s. Back in 1990 the recycling rate was around 40% compared to 50% 10 years later, and 72% in 2013."^{6,7}

- "The paper industry is the largest recycler in Europe. Recovered fibres are particularly suited for applications such as newsprint and packaging, but also fine papers can be based on recycled fibres. However, for some "higher quality" publication paper and some packaging applications, for example, only top quality paper for recycling can be used but it is not available in large quantities."⁸
- "Today 54% of the paper industry's fibre raw material comes from paper for recycling. Paper is the most recycled product in Europe, and as a region, Europe is the global champion in paper recycling with a rate of 72%."⁹
- "Newsprint is a big user of paper for recycling. Its utilisation rate of paper for recycling has reached 97% (2013). Another main user is packaging, with a utilisation rate of 75%, especially case materials, which uses 94% paper for recycling and accounts for over 50% of the total volume used."¹⁰
- "Every time paper is recycled, the fibres get shorter. After being recycled five to seven times, the fibres become too short to bond into new paper. New fibres must be added to replace the unusable fibre that washes out of the pulp during the recycling process."¹¹



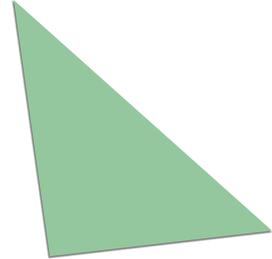
- "Determining the best use of recovered and virgin fibre for any paper type requires a life cycle perspective with an evaluation of the environmental, economic and technical considerations

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along the entire supply chain. This includes understanding where fibre is coming from (source), how the paper is made (manufacturing) and how effectively fibre can be utilized depending on the paper type (use).¹²

- Life cycle analysis has shown that the end of life (how a product is disposed of) contributes nearly as much to the carbon footprint of a product as the manufacturing process. One

way to promote recycling is to use currently available “Please Recycle” logos and claims, and to get engaged in recycling initiatives with end users, cities and communities.¹³ Likewise it is essential that all actors in the value chain consider design for circularity so as to prevent value destruction of materials in paper-based products.

1. [SAPPI, 2011. Vol 2. Sustainable use of recycled fibre](#)
2. [U.S. Environmental Protections Agency \(EPA\), 2013](#)
3. [ERPC, 2014](#)
4. [ERPC, 2015](#)
5. [Indufor, 2013](#)
6. [ERPC, 2015](#)
7. [ERPC, 2014](#)
8. [ERPC, 2015](#)

9. [CEPI, 2015](#)
10. [CEPI, 2013](#)
11. [U.S. Environmental Protections Agency \(EPA\), 2013](#)
12. Metafore, 2009. Recycled Content and Virgin Fiber: Environmental, Economic and Technical Considerations for Magazine Publishers.
13. [SAPPI, 2011. Vol 2. Sustainable use of recycled fibre](#)

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