

SUSTAINABILITY UPDATE

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EHS & Sustainability

Recycled Content in Products

Recycled Fiber or New Fiber - Which is Better?

Recycling is beneficial because it helps extend the useful life of vital natural resources and protects against additional materials going to a landfill. Ultimately, customers decide which grades of paper meet their needs. The fiber types used in products contribute to the brightness, strength and weight requirements of that product. Recovered paper is not always recycled into the same kind of paper and some products require the strength of new fiber content.

Paper performance, air and water quality, energy required for transportation, sorting and deinking and natural resource conservation are all factors we weigh to gauge the costs and benefits of new fiber versus recovered fiber content. In fact, the use of increasing amounts of recovered fiber in products may actually increase the amount of chemicals and water needed in the pulping process to meet quality standards. International Paper offers a range of products to carefully balance these concerns while meeting the needs of our customers. Whether it's providing products from recovered paper or new fiber content from sustainably managed sources – our products make the grade.

Our company realizes that paper production cannot be sustained by recovered fiber alone. One study¹ has shown that we would run out of paper in 30 days if we relied only on recovered fiber for our production needs. It is important to ensure that the new fiber we do use is managed sustainably and in a way that protects the environment. New fiber used by our company is certified to the Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) procurement standard and to the SFI, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) chain-of-custody Standards. Encouraging use of wood fiber actually encourages landowners to manage their forestlands sustainably for both current economic value and future needs. While recycling does not eliminate the need for new wood fiber in the process, the combination of wood fiber from well-managed forests and high recovery rates make paper one of the most sustainable products in the marketplace.

In summary, new and recovered fiber are complementary, and both are important. The proper balance isn't seen as much in the fiber content of a single paper product as it is in global fiber usage. Papermakers in some places must rely more on recovered paper than those in other areas that have access to renewable new fiber. Both kinds of fiber must be carefully managed and balanced to sustainably meet world demand.

The Chasing Arrows - A Closer Look

Though many paper and packaging products bear the mobius loop or "chasing arrows" symbol, this does not necessarily mean that they contain recycled content. The terms "recycle" or "recyclable" on your paper products mean that they can be recovered through local and statewide recycling programs. Paper and packaging products may contain recycled fiber without printing that information on the product or its packaging. To use the chasing arrows symbol, a manufacturer must qualify any claim by clarifying the label use or indicating the percentage of pre-consumer (materials before they enter the waste stream such as scraps at a printer) or postconsumer (material recycled by the end user) fiber in the product.

Most of our grades can be made with 10 percent postconsumer waste (PCW) fiber, and many grades are available with up to 30 percent PCW fiber. We provide recycled fiber options for food contact paper and packaging applications where we have determined that the fiber meets food contact guidelines as established by the U.S. Food & Drug Administration. To find out which recycled content products are available to meet your quality needs and environmental goals of your product, contact your sales representative.

1The Fiber Cycle Technical Document. Metafore, March 2006.

Recycling at International Paper

- International Paper's nineteen U.S. recycling facilities collect more than 6 million tons of recycled commodities annually, including 12 percent of total recovered paper.
- International Paper, the City of Memphis and FCR, Inc. have introduced a new corrugated and paperboard curbside recycling program to their headquarters city of Memphis, Tenn.
- Office paper generated at International Paper's Global Headquarters in Memphis, Tenn. is used in the production of recycled grades of paper at our Mansfield, LA or Selma, AL Mills.

To find out more

- Nearly 90 percent of Americans have access to curbside or drop-off paper recycling programs. For more information and statistics, visit paperrecycles.org/recycling/index.html.
- To find educational materials on recycling for consumers please visit us at ipsustainability.com

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