



## Why Recycle?

### I've heard that the U.S. has plenty of trees. Why recycle?

You're right; there are plenty of trees in the United States. As a result of the forest products industry's sustainable forestry practices, there are more trees in the U.S. today than there were 75 years ago. And because more trees are grown in the U.S. than are harvested, there will be plenty of trees and forest products for future generations to enjoy.

But we should continue to recover our paper products for recycling. While our forest resources are abundant, adding recycled fiber to new wood fiber is a good way to stretch our forest resources.

Recycling also helps control waste disposal problems. For every ton of paper recovered for recycling, about 3 cubic yards of landfill space are saved. And in many cases, recovering paper for recycling can save communities money that they would otherwise have to spend for disposal.

In 1999, about 45 percent of the paper used in the U.S. was diverted from the waste stream to be recycled into new paper products. Today, recovered paper supplies over 38 percent of the total fiber needed to produce our country's paper products.





## Why Recycle?



Paper was first manufactured in the U.S. in 1690 at the Rittenhouse Mill near Philadelphia. Rags were the main source of papermaking fiber for centuries

### Is recycling something new?

Although Americans have become more aware of the benefits of recycling over the past decade, recycling is not new.

In fact, nearly all paper manufactured in Europe and the U.S. through the mid-1800s could be considered recycled paper. Old rags and worn-out clothing were the primary source of fiber supplying the paper mills, because the process for making paper from wood had not yet been developed!

Today, recovered paper comes from many sources. Old newspapers and corrugated containers, because they are valuable and easy to recycle, have been collected and recycled for years. In mills, trimmings from the paper machines are continually reused in the paper-making process.

The paper recycling industry has seen dramatic changes over the past decade. Previously, recycled fiber was mostly used to produce products of lower quality. Today, because of new technology, recycled fiber can sometimes be used nearly interchangeably with new fiber to make even the highest quality grades of paper.

### Why use wood at all?

### Why can't we make all the paper we need by recycling?

This is a good question. We do recycle a lot of paper. In fact, about 45 percent of the paper used in the U.S. is recycled back into new paper and paperboard products. However, the world's demand for paper is simply too great to rely on recovered paper as the industry's only fiber source. Wood and other materials must be used to supply the remaining fiber.

Wood fibers can only be recycled five to seven times before they become too short and "worn out" to be made into paper again. New wood fiber is needed to replace the unusable recycled fiber that washes out of the pulp during the recycling process.

Of course, we could never recycle 100 percent of the paper we use. Much of it is soiled with food or other contaminants. And a lot of paper is stored permanently in the form of books and documents.





## Why Recycle?

### What's the difference between pre-consumer and post-consumer recovered paper?

Pre-consumer recovered paper consists of trimmings and scraps from printing, carton manufacturing, and other converting processes that are re-processed in the mill without reaching the final consumer.

Post-consumer recovered paper (like old corrugated boxes, newspapers, magazines, and office paper), already has been used by the ultimate consumer, and is then returned to the mill for recycling.

Although some papers contain 100 percent recycled fiber, papermakers will often combine various amounts of recycled fiber with new fiber to produce paper of the desired grade and quality.



### Are there advantages to using recovered paper over using new fiber?

Some paper recycling has real environmental and economic benefits. Some does not. Depending on the circumstances, paper recycling may end up using more resources than it saves, or costing too much to be of much benefit. A lot depends upon the type of recovered paper being used and the type of recycled paper being produced.

Because wood and recovered paper are both abundant in the U.S., both are excellent fiber sources. And because advanced recycling technology allows papermakers to use recycled fiber in new ways, the possibilities for using recycled fiber in today's paper products are greater than ever. Today about 38 percent of the raw material used in U.S. paper mills is recovered paper.

In many cases, the quality of recycled paper products is very close to the quality of those made from new fiber. Paper manufacturers must choose the raw materials best suited to make their products. In some cases, new wood fiber is the better choice; other times, recycled fiber is preferable. It is up to the manufacturer to decide how to use the fewest possible resources to make quality products that meet consumers' needs.



## Why Recycle?

### Recycling: A closer look



Forty-two out of the fifty U.S. states have mills that use recovered paper.

Out of the 521 paper, paperboard, and building products mills in the U.S., 450 use recovered paper, and 22 rely on it exclusively.

Worldwide, over 95 million metric tons of paper are recovered each year to be made into recycled paper and paperboard. Recovered fiber makes up over one-third of the total fiber used to make the world's paper.

Recovery of office paper has more than doubled since 1998. In 1996, 3,810,000 tons of office paper were recovered, up from 1,600,000 tons in 1990.

More paper and paperboard packaging is recovered for recycling than all glass, plastic, metal, and other materials combined! In 1998, nearly 20 million tons of paper and paperboard packaging were recovered for recycling in the U.S.

As much as 75% of all corrugated material and containers are recovered for recycling in the U.S.



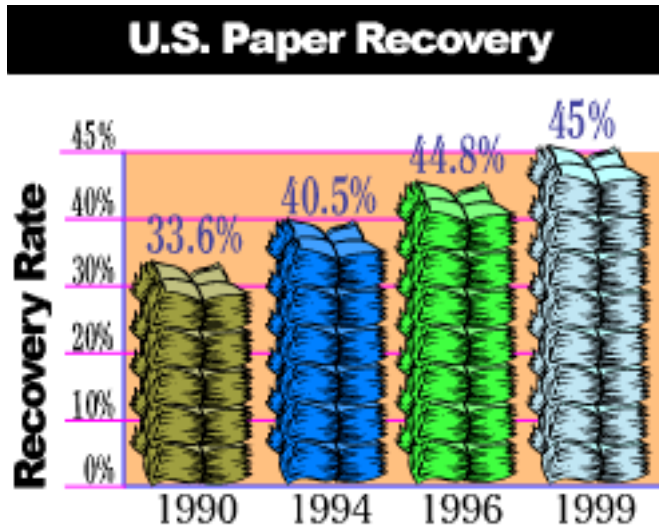
As much as 68% of all newsprint used in the U.S. is recovered for recycling. A little more than a third of this is recycled back into newsprint. Other products made from recovered newsprint include cereal boxes, corrugated boxes, books, insulating materials, printing and writing paper, tissue, egg cartons, and animal bedding.

The United States is the world's leading paper recycler. Thanks to Americans' commitment to recycling, we collect over one-third of all the paper recovered in the world.



## Why Recycle?

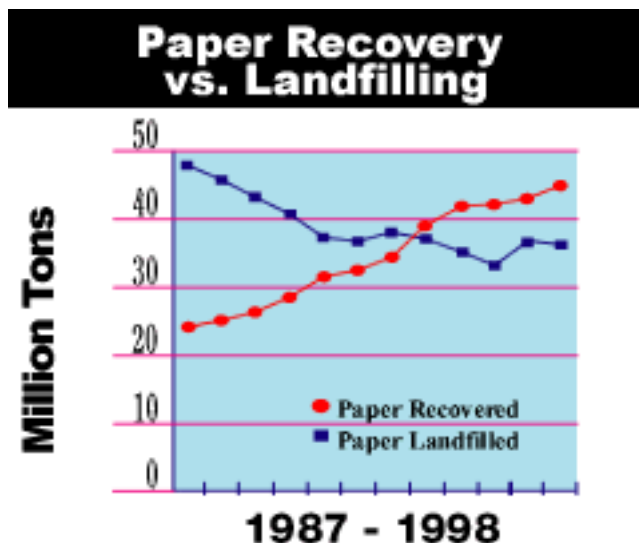
### Some interesting recycling statistics



Source: American Forest & Paper Association

In 1999, Americans recovered nearly 45 percent of all paper used.

We are well on our way toward achieving the industry's goal to recover 50 percent of all paper used.



Source: American Forest & Paper Association

More paper is now recovered in the U.S. than is sent to landfills.

Every day, U.S. papermakers recycle enough paper to fill a 15-mile-long-train of boxcars



## Why Recycle?

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# GREENQUIZ

### True or False?

1. Recycling can save communities money. **T or F**
2. More plastic packaging is recovered for recycling than paper packaging. **T or F**
3. Old corrugated boxes can be recycled. **T or F**
4. Post-consumer paper is paper which has been used by consumers. **T or F**
5. Only half of the states in the U.S. have mills that recycle. **T or F**
6. It is possible to recycle 100 percent of the paper we use. **T or F**
7. More paper is sent to landfills in the U.S. than is recovered. **T or F**
8. Thirty-five percent of the fiber used in U.S. mills comes from recovered paper. **T or F**
9. Wood fibers can be recycled indefinitely. **T or F**
10. There are more trees in the U.S. today than there were 75 years ago. **T or F**

[See the next page for the answers](#)



## Why Recycle?

1. **True**
2. **False** - More paper and paperboard packaging is recovered for recycling than all plastic, glass, and metal combined.
3. **True**
4. **True**
5. **False** - Forty-two out of the fifty states have mills using recovered paper.
6. **False** - Because of permanent storage, contamination, and fiber degradation, we could never recycle 100 percent of our paper.
7. **False** - More paper is recovered in the U.S. than is sent to landfills.
8. **True**
9. **False** - Fibers can only be recycled five to seven times before they become too short and “worn out” to be recycled again.
10. **True**

Sources:

Focus 95+ Proceedings, TAPPI PRESS  
Packaging in America in the 1990s, Institute of Packaging Professionals  
Secondary Fiber Recycling, TAPPI PRESS  
American Forest & Paper Association

These facts are presented by individual scientists, engineers, and researchers who work at universities, research laboratories, and companies across the country. They work at the science of papermaking every day -- researching and testing the facts. It is their full-time job to understand and report the facts concerning the nature of forest practices, the processes involved in papermaking, and how these affect the environment -- good and bad.

TAPPI is the leading technical association for the worldwide pulp, paper, and converting industry. The Association provides a neutral forum for members to come together to share their technical knowledge and expertise in an effort to further advance professional achievement and sound technology.