

RECYCLING MADE EASY

About one fifth of the contents of household dustbins consists of paper and card, of which half is newspapers and magazines. In 2000/01, paper and card accounted for almost a third of all household waste collected for recycling, with 0.9 million tonnes being picked up. This means that around 5 million tonnes of household paper and card is not recycled and is largely going to landfill. Bring offices and industrial premises into this equation and the amount of paper wasted goes sky high.

But does recycling paper actually save trees? *We take a look at the facts behind the common conceptions...*

Although the raw material for making paper is predominantly trees, it is a misconception that recycling waste paper saves trees. Trees for paper making are actually grown and harvested as a long term crop, with new trees planted to replace those cut down. As such, nearly all paper is made from wood grown in these "sustainable" forests.

However, there are more important environmental issues to consider which are:

- **The nature of forests and where they are situated.** As the demand for paper has increased, more timber has been needed to meet the demand for wood pulp. In some cases this has meant the loss of valuable wildlife habitats and ecosystems, as old Forests have been replaced by managed plantations, usually of conifers. The use of recycled paper helps to protect wildlife habitats,
- By using waste paper to produce new paper, **disposal problems are reduced.**
- Producing recycled paper involves between 28 - 70% **less energy consumption** than producing virgin paper and uses less water. This is because most of the energy used in papermaking is the pulping needed to turn wood into paper.
- **Recycled paper produces fewer polluting emissions to air and water.** 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.

What are the alternatives to recycling paper?

Failing to recycle usually ends in adding to the already huge problem of waste disposal. Landfill is the common answer, but is fraught with much publicised environmental concerns of its own.

Then there's incineration. Whilst this method of disposal could create energy, the Centre for Social and Economic Research on the Global Environment recently concluded that recycling paper saves more energy than is generated through its incineration. It also found that the UK's national income rises by around £154 for every additional tonne of paper recycled; recycling creates three times the number of jobs than incineration would and recycling offers savings for local authorities!

So, recycling is the way forward and we can all do our bit to help – especially at work where the amount of paper and card used really mounts up. Waste paper and card packaging of goods delivered from your workplace can be collected by Paper Chase. Bins can be supplied to each office to make recycling of your used paper easy to recycle.

