



# Print and Paper The Facts

Paper is one of the most recycled products in the world

In addition to the sustainable advantage of being made from a renewable resource, paper is the most recycled product in the world. Since we began tracking how much paper gets recycled in North America 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 65 to almost 80% in North America, Western Europe and Japan."<sup>1</sup>
- The U.S. paper recovery rate rose from 63.5% in 2013 to 66.8% in 2015, the highest reading ever recorded. It measured 33.5% back in 1990, which was the base year against which the American Forest & Paper Association began setting its recovery goals. AF&PA member companies have set a goal to increase the U.S. paper recovery rate to more than 70% by 2020.<sup>2</sup>
- "Revised estimates indicate that the amount of paper going to landfills in the U.S. has declined by nearly half since the year 2000, falling from an estimated 41 million tons to about 21 million tons in 2014."<sup>3</sup>
- "In the U.S. in 2013, more paper products were recovered (as a percent of generation) for recycling than any other material, including plastics (9%), glass (27%) and metals (34%)."<sup>4</sup>
- "Canada has one of the highest recovery rates of waste paper and packaging in the world at 73%, significantly better than the international average of 56%."<sup>5</sup>
- The pulp and paper industry produces recyclable products made from renewable resources that are produced using renewable energy. Recycling is a key aspect of this circular economy— treating all materials, including by-products, as valuable resources rather than wastes. For example, a magazine can be shared with a friend, then recycled and converted to a cereal box, recycled again to make tissue and ultimately end up as compost. It is especially important to recover paper and other organic materials to avoid the generation of methane emissions in landfills.<sup>6</sup>
- The benefits of paper recycling include: extending the supply of wood fiber; 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]; reducing the amount of energy needed to produce some paper products; and saving considerable landfill space.<sup>7</sup>
- Globally, recovered paper is the most important papermaking fiber raw material. In 2014, the world total share for papermaking was 56.6% and this is expected to reach 61.1% by 2030 (increase of 1.5% per year).<sup>8</sup>
- Recovered paper is used worldwide and, "for many mills, is the dominant raw material in their production processes such that it has been the leading fiber source in volume terms for the last seven years in a row. At the same time, it should also be remembered that there is always a requirement for a complement of fresh fiber."<sup>9</sup>
- In 2014, over 90% of recovered paper in North America was used in grades other than printing and writing grades, such as newsprint, tissue, container boards, and other packaging or board products. This share is not forecasted to change by 2030.<sup>10</sup>
- In North America, the share of recovered paper used in papermaking is expected to grow from 34.2% in 2014 to 39.3% in 2030 and most of that increase will be in containerboards.<sup>11</sup>
- Data for 2014 indicate that 33% of the paper and paperboard recovered in the U.S. went to produce containerboard (i.e. the material used for corrugated boxes) and 12% went to produce boxboard, which includes folding boxes and gypsum wallboard facings. Exports of recovered paper to China and other nations accounted for 39% of the paper collected for recycling.<sup>12</sup>



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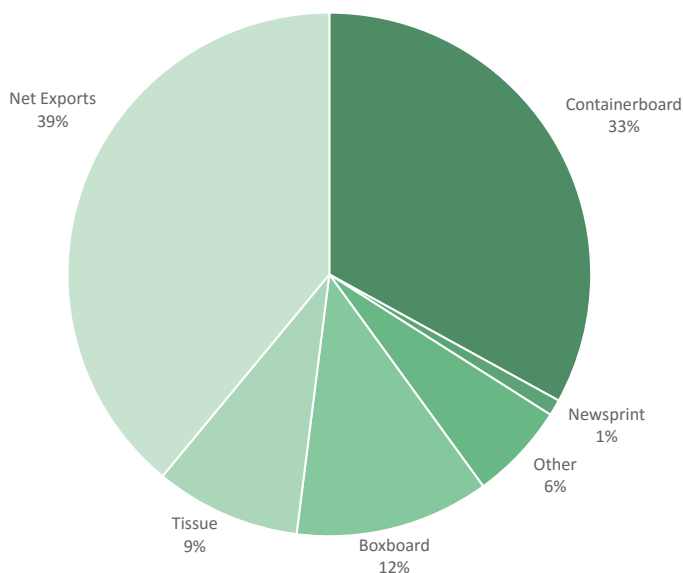
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- Most paper in North America is made from sawmill residues and recovered paper. Only 36% of the U.S. timber harvest is used each year in manufacturing paper and paperboard.<sup>13</sup> In Canada, 87% of the wood fiber used to make paper comes from sawmill residues (59%) and recycled paper (28%).<sup>14</sup>
- The paper recycling segment of the scrap recycling industry collects, sorts, and processes the recovered fiber into specification grade products that were valued at \$7.8 billion in the U.S. in 2014. These products are sold and transported to paper mills at home and

worldwide for production into new packaging, office paper, tissue, newsprint, and a multitude of other paper products. In the U.S., approximately 76% of paper mills rely on recovered fiber to make some or all of their products due in part to recovered paper's significant cost and energy savings. In addition, the paper and fiber recovered helps to meet growing overseas demand: recovered paper was exported to more than 85 different countries in 2014 at a value of approximately \$3.2 billion, not including the tremendous environmental benefits and energy savings, while significantly helping the U.S. balance of trade.<sup>15</sup>



Where U.S. recovered paper goes (www.paperrecycles.org)

<sup>1</sup> [Engel and Moore, 2013](#)

<sup>2</sup> [American Forest & Paper Association, 2016](#)

<sup>3</sup> [American Forest & Paper Association, 2015](#)

<sup>4</sup> [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2015](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Forest Products Association of Canada, 2015](#)

<sup>6</sup> [SAPPI, 2015](#)

<sup>7</sup> [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2015](#)

<sup>8</sup> Jaakko Poyry, 2015. World Fibre Outlook. Confidential Report.

<sup>9</sup> [Bureau of International Recycling, 2014](#)

<sup>10</sup> Jaakko Poyry, 2015. World Fibre Outlook. Confidential Report.

<sup>11</sup> Jaakko Poyry, 2015. World Fibre Outlook. Confidential Report.

<sup>12</sup> [American Forest and Paper Association, 2015](#)

<sup>13</sup> [Dovetail Partners, 2014](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Forest Products Association of Canada, 2012](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries, 2016](#)

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