

PAPER IS A LOVABLE RECYCLABLE

By Patti Lynn CRP
Recycling Resources Manager



When you talk about recycling, it's likely that plastic is the material on everyone's minds. "Plastic is confusing!" (Yes, it is!) "Do we really need it?" (Yes and no)

But paper? Not so much. Why not? Because paper is one of the easiest materials to recycle, and it has a long history of recyclability in the US (1600's by many accounts). Recycling one ton of paper saves 3.3 cubic yards of our precious landfill space!¹

Paper can be recycled 5-7 times. The longer the paper's fibers, the more times it can be recycled into a new product before it loses its integrity. Today's copy paper can be next week's newspaper, then next month's paper towels.

Using recovered paper in mills is more economical than using virgin fiber. The process does not require extreme heat for melting, as it does for plastic, glass, and metals. Energy costs are a concern, however most of the mills in our eastern region have very efficient systems. Philadelphia's Newman Mill, for example, has a closed loop system that co-generates, producing its own steam and electricity. Using 100% recycled feedstock, Newman Paper manufactures chip board used in the making of packaging, gameboards, puzzles, candy boxes, book covers and many other everyday products.

About 80% of US paper mills depend on used paper to manufacture some or all their products.¹ Overall, the fiber mill industry is healthy, there is plenty of recyclable fiber feedstock available and trucking and labor are finally finding some stabilization.

WHAT PAPER IS ACCEPTABLE IN RECYCLING BINS? Clean loads are essential! Unsoiled junk mail, magazines, newspaper, office paper, flattened cereal boxes/paperboard and corrugated, and CLEAN pizza boxes (NO FOOD OR GREASE!).

Not all paper collected for recycling in Chester County ends up at the same mill. Each has their own unique limits on what specific fibers they need and contamination levels. **Always check with your municipality or private recycling hauler to know what is acceptable.**

Let's be Trash Smart. Appreciate your paper when you use it and love it enough to easily recycle it!

#####

¹ ISRI 4/5/23, <https://www.isri.org/recycled-commodities/paper>