



HOW IS IT RECYCLED?

HOW IS PAPER RECYCLED?

Paper is collected from different sources and may be separated into categories like newsprint, office paper, mixed paper, and cardboard. The material is shipped to a mill where it is brought to the pulper. Here warm water and chemicals break the paper into pulp. This pulp is called “slurry”. Since pulp starts out as 99 percent water and 1 percent fiber, slurry looks like a thick milkshake. Next, ink is removed, and pulp is bleached and mixed with traditional pulp from trees. The pulp is now ready to be made into various types of paper. The mixed pulp is pumped between two moving screens. The water is removed from the top and bottom, and the fibers form a mat. The mat is sent through drying rollers to remove more moisture. It's then ironed for smoothness, and the paper is packed in cartons or rolls. Recycling paper saves about forty percent of the energy used to make paper from raw materials.

HOW IS GLASS RECYCLED?

Glass containers are collected and sorted into clear, green and brown glass. The color-separated glass containers must be crushed into small pieces called “cullet” and cleaned before being mixed with sand, limestone and soda ash at the glass factory. Then it is heated in a large furnace and molded into new bottles and jars.

Recycled glass is just as strong as glass made from sand or virgin resources. Glass never wears out, and glass containers can be recycled forever without loss of quality. Recycling glass saves nearly a quarter of the energy used to make glass from raw materials.

HOW IS PLASTIC RECYCLED?

Plastics are sorted by number 1 through 7, or by product such as soft-drink containers and milk jugs. This sorting increases the value, as materials may be compacted or baled to reduce shipping costs. Sorted plastics are chopped, washed, and converted into flakes or pellets. The flakes or pellets are heated and formed into new products. Plastic containers are most likely formed into other products such as sleeping bags, carpets, clothing, and containers for non-eatable storage. Mixed plastics can be recycled into products such as plastic lumber and car stops.

HOW ARE CANS RECYCLED?

Cans are separated into steel or aluminum cans. (Tin cans are actually made of steel with a small amount of tin covering the container.) The cans are baled so they take up less space when they go to the smelter. Aluminum is a good example of how recycling can reduce pollution. Making new cans from recycled aluminum cuts air pollution and cuts energy requirements by 95 percent.