



## Landfills get fat, not heavy!

Measurement by weight is commonly used to describe how much material enters a landfill or makes up a household's waste stream.

But when you think about it, it is not so much the weight of a material that fills up a landfill or a recycling truck as the volume of that material or the space it takes up. As they say, landfills get fat, not heavy!

The chart below looks at some common packaging materials both by weight and by volume. Note that paper packaging barely changes but that there are significant differences with glass and plastic packaging.

Glass is a heavy material but when it breaks, its volume drops considerably. Plastic on the other hand, is a very light material and takes up a lot of space.

<b>Packaging Material</b>	<b>% by weight</b>	<b>% by volume</b>
Aluminum	0.5%	1.4%
Glass	5.7%	1.6%
Steel	1.4%	1.9%
Paper & Paperboard	12.7%	13.1%
Plastic	4.1%	10.0%
Wood	4.6%	4.5%
Miscellaneous	0.1%	0.1%
All Packaging	29.2%	32.7%

Source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (1990 data).