



PPEC Factsheet

Paper Packaging Flow Chart

Some 76% of the paper packaging made in Canada is made from *recycled pulp*, from the old boxes and other used paper material collected from the back of factories, supermarkets and office buildings, and from curbside Blue Box programs and drop-off depots. Paper fibres can be recycled between four and nine times. After that, they become too thin and weak to be of any further use in papermaking. So some virgin fibre (either sawmill residues or freshly-cut trees) is required to [replace them on an ongoing basis](#).

[The packaging mills](#) use these pulps to make packaging board or paper. This is then shipped to a [converter or box plant](#) where the board or packaging paper is printed, slotted, creased, folded and glued before being sent on to a packer/distributor or to the customer to be filled with product. Any leftover material (corrugated clippings or boxboard trim) is sent back to the mill for recycling.

Depending on what type of product it is now carrying, the package ends up at a factory, supermarket, office building, restaurant, hospital (industrial consumers), or in the home (household consumers). These consumers remove the product and now have a decision to make about what to do with the package that got it there: recycle it or put it in the garbage.

Fortunately, most industrial paper packaging (mainly corrugated boxes) is recaptured for further recycling in Canada. PPEC estimates the national recycling rate to be about 85 per cent. This is supplemented by good recovery rates through various provincial Blue Box/ depot systems. The material is collected, sorted, and sent to recycling mills to make new packaging. And so the cycle repeats itself.

