

The Blue Box Series

Every wonder what happens to recyclables once you place them at curb or take them to your local recycling depot? In this series, RCBC will examine where and how newsprint, cardboard, metal cans, glass containers, rigid plastics and plastic bags are recycled. This month RCBC looks at cardboard.



part 2: cardboard

Cardboard is paper-based product that comes in one of two forms: corrugated fiberboard or paperboard. Corrugated fiberboard consists of a fluted (grooved) piece in between two flat paper liners. Paperboard is a flat material used for hardcover books and folding cartons. The sturdiness of cardboard makes it ideal for packaging and transporting goods.

Cardboard can also come in waxed form. Waxed cardboard is used to package vegetables, meat, fish and other frozen foods. The waxy coating that makes the cardboard waterproof also makes it difficult to recycle using conventional methods.

where can it be recycled?

Cardboard is banned from most BC landfills because it is a fully recyclable material. Residents can recycle their cardboard through the municipal curbside recycling program or at the local recycling depot. The only exception is waxed cardboard which is not accepted through municipal recycling programs.

Businesses have to pay private recyclers to provide a scheduled pickup of their cardboard. Some municipalities offer businesses assistance in setting up cardboard recycling at their facilities.

where does it go?

The Port Townsend Paper Corporation (PTPC) and its Crown Packaging division, operate facilities in Port Townsend, WA, as well as Richmond, BC. They produce unbleached Kraft pulp, paper, linerboard and corrugated products. In 2009, they closed their Kelowna and Calgary operations due to the economic downturn.

Norampac, a division of Cascades Inc., manufactures linerboard and corrugated cardboard from 100% recycled fibre. Their mill is located in Burnaby, BC.

Some cardboard is also shipped to the United States and overseas for processing.

what is it recycled into?

Cardboard can be recycled into more cardboard, Kraft paper bags, gypsum wallboard liner, tissue boxes, cereal boxes etc.

why recycle cardboard?

- It saves energy! It takes 25% less energy to make cardboard from recycled fibres than it does to use virgin fibres.
- Recycling one tonne of paperboard saves approximately 20, 964 empty tissue boxes from the landfill.

the recycling process

1. Cardboard is collected and sent to a sorting facility.
2. It's then baled and sent to a cardboard processing plant.
3. At the processing plant, the cardboard goes through a pulper which adds water and agitates the fibres to produce a pulp.
4. Contaminants (i.e. plastic, string and dirt etc) are then removed via screens.
5. The pulp moves through insulated pipes that melt any adhesives.
6. The pulp moves through another screen to remove remaining contaminants.
7. It's then rolled into sheets and pressed to remove any excess water.
8. The sheets are passed over hot rollers to dry.
9. The sheets are wound up into rolls and sent to be manufactured into new cardboard products.

This process can occur up to five times before the strength and overall quality of the cardboard decreases.

For additional information, contact the **RCBC Recycling Hotline**
604-732-9235 (Lower Mainland) | 1-800-667-4321 (province-wide)
Monday through Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm | www.rcbc.bc.ca

