

Paperboard Packaging Products

March 2015

Did you know?

Making a ton of paper products from recycled paper saves up to 17 trees and uses 50% less water. (Energy Information Administration website, 2015)

Minimum Sustainable Recommendations

When developing bid documents for paperboard packaging (e.g. corrugated cardboard, cartons, boxboard etc), request the following:

- Paperboard packaging must contain a minimum of 30% post-consumer waste.
- Paperboard packaging must be certified by one of the following three internationally recognized forest and manufacturing environmental certifications:
 - Forest Stewardship Council (FSC),
 - Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI),
 - Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)
- If paperboard packaging products are certified by any of the above certifications, the certification logo must be present on the product.
- If the natural colour of the packaging is acceptable, request unbleached paperboard packaging. If bleaching is required, request vendors to outline the bleaching method and show preference for process chlorine free (PCF).
- If printing is required on packaging, request vendors to outline the printing process and show preference for advanced water-based printing processes.

Other things to consider

To minimize greenhouse gas emissions and solid waste production, the vendor should be encouraged to develop sustainable delivery strategies:

1. Product delivery consolidations
2. Efficient logistics and route planning
3. No idling of vehicles
4. Use of fuel efficient delivery vehicle.

What are the sustainability issues?

In addition to direct impacts on the forest from timber harvesting, producing packaging at a mill uses large amounts of energy, water and chemicals. During the manufacturing process, harmful emissions are released into the atmosphere and into our water bodies.

What are the sustainability options?

Luckily, through the efforts of the purchaser, a business can significantly reduce the environmental impacts on the forest and at the paper mill.

This document contains key considerations and suggestions for sustainable specifications and standards. Use of these specifications are intended to be guidelines for public sector procurers. Mention of any company name or product does not constitute or imply endorsement.

Purchasing packaging products made with paper collected from our blue bin (post-consumer waste) can help reduce the use of energy and water at the pulp and paper mill and reduce the use of forest resources. Purchasing packaging products made with paper from our blue bins creates a market demand for the materials collected in our blue bin.

If you purchase paper products containing 30% post-consumer waste, this means that 70% of the product is made of harvested tree pulp. Internationally recognized certifications including Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Sustainable Forestry Initiative (SFI) and Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) ensure that the pulp originated from sustainably harvested and responsibly managed forests.

In addition, consider purchasing unbleached packaging products or products produced from mills that do not use chlorine or chlorine compounds during the packaging bleaching process. Various terms including elemental chlorine-free (ECF), process chlorine-free (PCF) and total chlorine-free (TCF) are often used to define the bleaching process. If you are purchasing packaging products with post-consumer waste, the PCF specification is often requested. When you request PCF in a tender document, the pulp in the paper is totally chlorine-free and the recycled portion, (post-consumer waste fiber) has not been re-bleached with chlorine-containing compounds.

If printing is required on the packaging, consider the use of water-based printing processes to reduce the use of solvents and therefore reduce the emissions of volatile organic compounds (VOCs).