

## **Two and a half times our own blood levels - the alcohol to be consumed over Christmas and New Year**

- Irish adults to consume 16 litres of alcohol this Christmas and New Year
- Households to consume more than the weight of an adult in used packaging
- 95,000 tonnes of used packaging will be generated this Christmas

(Dublin, 28.12.05) Repak, the used packaging compliance scheme, estimates that on average Irish adults will consume a staggering two and half times their own blood levels at home this Christmas and New Year period, the equivalent of almost 16 litres of alcohol\*. Thanks to Ireland's appetite for Christmas parties and presents each household will consume, in total, 74 kilos of used packaging, more than the weight of an average adult\*. The figures are revealed as part of this year's Repak Green Christmas campaign, supported by Race Against Waste, to encourage Irish householders to recycle the extra 30% of used packaging that is generated over Christmas. The campaign runs until the 7<sup>th</sup> January 2006.

The new Repak Green Christmas consumption figures show that over 130 million containers, which can be recycled, could be sent to landfill this Christmas. The staggering figures mean that each Irish household will consume 12 litres of wine, 21 litres of beer, 1 litre of spirits, 46 litres of soft drinks. In addition we will go through 18 kilos of cardboard and paper made up from Christmas items such as selection boxes, present boxes and wrapping paper. With Ireland expected to generate 95,000 tonnes of recyclable packaging, it is predicted that the country will consume the following this Christmas:

- 54 million aluminium cans of beer
- 15 million bottles of beer
- 20 million bottles of wine
- 2.6 million bottles of spirits

- 4 million plastic bottles of soft drinks
- 28 million aluminium cans of soft drink
- 4 million cardboard boxes of chocolates
- 2.6 million cardboard toy boxes
- Almost 4 million sheets of wrapping paper

Andrew Hetherington, CEO, Repak, said, "As this is the first Christmas since pay-by-weight and pay-by-use has been introduced nationwide, Irish householders could save up to €44 million from their Christmas waste bill by recycling their used packaging. We are calling on all Irish householders to recycle as much of their used packaging this Christmas and join in the race against waste to reduce the amount traditionally sent to landfill by recycling more."

90 specially designated Repak Green Christmas centres will be set-up throughout the country, with extended opening hours. Visit [www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie) for information on your nearest local centre.

In terms of volume, the 44 million litres of alcohol we will consume at Christmas, is enough liquid to fill 29 Olympic sized swimming pools. If all the glass wine and beer bottles were laid out end to end, the resulting tower would stretch from Ireland to Sri Lanka, a distance of over 9,000 kilometres. 23,000 tonnes of cardboard and paper packaging alone is generated, the weight of nearly 4,000 elephants. If all the wrapping paper was laid out side by side it would cover an area of 89 kilometres by 89 kilometres, which is enough to cover half the size of Leinster.

Dick Roche, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, says, "We can each do small things this Christmas to stay ahead in the Race Against Waste, such as reusing wrapping paper, composting fruit & vegetable peelings and bringing cans and glass to the bring centre for recycling. We are well on our way to achieving our target of 35% recycling by 2013, thanks to

the commitment of people throughout the country, but we can always do more to win the race and make this the greenest Christmas yet."

The Repak Green Christmas campaign was a huge success last year. It helped grow packaging recycling to nearly 18,000 tonnes in December 2004/January 2005, compared to 14,500 tonnes the previous year. This was an increase of 19% on the same period in the previous year or 2,000 tonnes over the target tonnages of 15,000 tonnes. In individual material types alone, Green Christmas 2004 saw the recovery from households in Ireland of the equivalent of:

- 92,800 trees from paper
- 26 million PET and HDPE plastic bottles
- 25 million aluminium drink cans
- 11 million steel food cans
- 32 million glass bottles

Repak Green Christmas runs from 19<sup>th</sup> December 2005 to 7<sup>th</sup> January 2006. The campaign is in its fifth year, having expanded from 1 participating local authority covering 11 recycling centres in 2001 to all local authorities in 2003 to partnering with Race Against Waste in 2004 and involving over 88 recycling centres nationwide.

Further information can be found at [www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie), [www.raceagainstwaste.ie](http://www.raceagainstwaste.ie) or by phoning Race Against Waste on the lo-call phone line 1890-667 639.

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## **Notes to editors**

\* According to the Irish Blood Transfusion Service, an average adult has between 10 and 12 pints of blood, which is approximately 6.25 litres.

\* This is based on the average weight of adults in the USA, which is 69.25 kilos.

## **Repak Green Christmas Tips 2005**

### **The 12 Days of Greener Christmas**

#### **Day 1 Choose the right Christmas tree**

Remember to buy real Christmas trees as they each remove 100,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide during their 9 years before maturing. For every tree chopped down another is planted. Noble Fir and Lodgepole Pine are said to be environmentally friendly as they will not shed their needles. Also treat a cut tree, like a cut flower – don't over expose it to light and heat and top up with water daily.

#### **Day 2 Organise Household Bins**

Put three bins in the kitchen: one for recyclables; one for compostable vegetable waste; one for general waste. Organise a dedicated storage space in your back garden or kitchen. Most hardware stores like Woodies or B&Q sell a range of special recycling bins and, if you have space, it's worth investing and installing these into this dedicated area.

#### **Day 3 Composting**

Put a small compost bin beside your general waste bin or if you've space build a compost pile in your garden for kitchen vegetable waste and garden waste. As well as your brown and green food waste, wormeries can break down cooked meats that other conventional garden composters cannot deal with. After a few months the compost should become dark

and crumbly and you can then start using it as top-soil or fertilizer to make your garden greener than ever.

#### **Day 4 Packaging Thrift**

Check for products with less packaging and use re-usable plates, cups and bags. Buy vegetables loose. Put leftover turkey and ham into reusable lunch boxes or containers with lids instead of using non-recyclable aluminium foil or plastic film.

#### **Day 5 Find your nearest Repak Green Christmas Centre or Bring Bank**

You may be surprised at the wide variety of materials they can accept and most have extended opening hours over Christmas. Visit [www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie) or check your local paper for further details.

#### **Day 6 Christmas wrapping**

Gather all the wrapping paper, cardboard boxes from presents into large bags for recycling or reuse. Also consider re-using brown paper and bits of fabric and ribbon to wrap presents and make them more individual and personal.

#### **Day 7 Morning After The Party**

Gather up all glass bottles and aluminium cans in separate bags or bins. Remember plastic bottles (PET and HDPE bottles) can also be recycled at most recycling centres – look for 3 chasing arrows with either a number 1 or number 2 inside – this means it can be recycled in Ireland. If you're looking for tips on how to improve your party, there's a good chance you'll meet a like minded reveler at the bring bank!

#### **Day 8 Be Clean**

Wash 'n' squash Tetra Pak beverage containers. Rinse out bottles and cans, remove lids and squash plastic containers to save space. Remember

don't litter at bring banks. Take home any boxes or containers you used to bring materials to your local bring bank in.

### **Day 9 Card Recycling**

Collect all Christmas cards together, which can also be recycled. Almost 4 million Christmas cards were recycled last year. Consider sending e-cards too to save on paper usage.

### **Day 10 Recycle used batteries**

Collect up all the used batteries. Consider giving a battery re-charger and rechargeable batteries for battery operated toys and gadgets. Look up [www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie) to find your nearest recycling centre that accept batteries.

### **Day 11 New Gadgets for Christmas?**

There are estimated to be over a million mobile phones dormant in Ireland and instead of leaving it dormant, bring it your Green Christmas recycling centre as most of them accept old mobile phones. You could also try selling your unwanted gadget on [www.ebay.ie](http://www.ebay.ie) or donating to charities looking for the products.

### **Day 12 Christmas Trees Recycling**

Take down decorations and tree. Remember you can recycle it at your local Christmas tree recycling centre. Visit [www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie) for more details.

### **About Repak**

Repak is a not-for-profit voluntary member's based packaging recycling scheme established under a voluntary agreement between industry and the Department of the Environment and Local Government. It was established as industry's response to the obligations placed on Ireland by the EU directive on Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) and is the only government approved packaging compliance scheme under the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Repak succeeded in reaching and exceeding Ireland's EU National

Packaging Recovery and Recycling Target of 25% of packaging waste in 2001 and is well on the way to achieving our 2005 EU packaging recovery target of 50%.