

Wise Women of Christmas Reduce Waste Bill by €44 Million

- Potential extra €34 on Christmas waste bill
- 90 special Repak Green Christmas centres open to help tackle excess of Christmas
- Over a third more women recycle compared to men
- Hints and tips to have a Green Christmas revealed

(Dublin, 21.12.05) Householders could face on average an extra €34 on top of their Christmas bills this year, according to new research by Repak. However, with over a third more women than men recycling regularly, it could be down to women to solve the financial, and waste, problems of households across the country.

The findings are revealed as the 5th annual Repak Green Christmas, supported by Race Against Waste, is launched today to make people aware of the money they could save this Christmas by recycling their waste and runs until the 7th January 2006. This year is the first Christmas where pay-by-weight and pay-by-use are in effect nationwide and it is estimated that the additional cost of sending recyclable material to landfill could cost Irish householders as much as €44 million*. The €250,000 public information campaign aims to recycle between 25-30,000 tonnes of the used packaging generated over Christmas, the equivalent of every household recycling almost 20 kilos. In total households will generate 95,000 tonnes of used Christmas packaging.

The Repak Green Christmas campaign is supported by Race Against Waste for the second year running to encourage people to recycle used packaging such as plastic bottles, aluminium cans, cardboard, glass and beverage cartons as well as other materials. Working with all local authorities, 90 special Repak Green Christmas centres have been set up throughout the country with extended

opening hours. Some of the larger sites will accept electrical and electronic goods as well as small items such as batteries and used mobile phones for recycling. Some of the 420,000 Christmas trees expected to be sold this Christmas can also be recycled at specially designated centres around the country. Visit www.repak.ie for details of your local recycling centre.

Repak's national research study showed that women aged between 35 and 44 are set to save the most money for the household this Christmas as they are the best recyclers. It is also revealed that women are over a third more likely than men to regularly recycle. Single people will also be hit by this new Christmas bill as Repak also revealed that they produce 275% more waste than an individual from a four person household and that the number of single people in Ireland is currently growing at 34%.

Andrew Hetherington, CEO, Repak, says, "This addition to our waste bill could unexpectedly hit all our pockets as it's the first Christmas since pay-by-weight and pay-by-use was introduced. We produce a staggering 30% additional used packaging over the Christmas period thanks to our ever increasing "Tiger Economy" appetite for presents and parties. If you want to save money, and help do your bit for the environment, ensure you recycle as much of your used packaging as possible this Christmas. Recycling is becoming easier and easier as the collection infrastructure expands and matures."

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 tonnage 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 worth of 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 19th December 2005 to 7th 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, 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

* This is based on charge per weight lift only in a randomly selected local authority and per use charges have not been factored; actual waste charges vary from local authority to local authority. It is also calculated from packaging waste only and does not include other domestic waste outside of Repak's remit.

The other research has been compiled from a number of sources including:

- Research undertaken by Millward Brown IMS in August 2005 amongst a nationally representative sample 1,200 adults.
- Attributable to Helmut Schmitz, Prevention Manager, Pro-Europe/DSD on average single person households produce 11kg of waste per week versus 4kg per person from a household of four occupants.
- Single Household Statistics (taken from official CSO and NSO, UK sources). Growth in single person households in Ireland from 1991 to 2002 is 34%. In the UK, single person households made up 30% in 2001 (6.5 million households) and a number of economic sources predict this will grow to 40% by 2010.

Repak Green Christmas Tips 2005

The 12 Days of Greener Christmas

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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 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 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 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 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%.