

Green Bins Trash BringBanks as Packaging Recycling Rate Reaches 65%.

- Packaging collected through household collection schemes overtakes joint BringBanks and Recycling Centres.
- Ireland reaches EU packaging recycling target 3 years ahead of schedule.
- Packaging recycling rate hits 65%.
- 713,000 tonnes recycled in 2008 up 9.5% from 2007.
- Household packaging recycling exceeds 212,000 tonnes.
- Household plastic packaging recycling grew by 24% to 29,280 tonnes with plastic bottles accounting for 67% of this figure.
- Over 4.4 million tonnes of used packaging diverted from landfill since Repak's establishment in 1998.
- Lack of Enforcement of Packaging Regulations means recycling losing out on €24 million per year.

20th August, 2009. In 2008, Irish householders recycled almost 10% more used packaging than in 2007 equating to 144kg per household or 50kg per person, according to packaging recycling scheme Repak. In total over €28.1 million was spent recycling 713,000 tonnes with householders making up 30% or 212,000 tonnes of total used packaging recycled in 2008. The total amount of packaging recycled equates to 356,406 truckloads or almost 26 million Green Bins of used packaging. This also resulted in the equivalent savings of 536,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions or the equivalent of taking over 173,000 cars off the road.

The recycling figures, which are available on www.repak.ie, also showed that for the first time domestic recycling through household recycling collection systems (i.e "Green Bins") grew by 26% to over 107,000 tonnes and over took recycling collected through bring facilities (both bring banks and recycling centres), which stands at 105,000 tonnes.

The figures also showed that cardboard and paper packaging continues to be the most recycled item at 47%, followed jointly by wood and glass at 18% each, plastic at 9% and metals coming in at 8%. In total, including household and commercial packaging recycling, the amount of individual materials recycled were:

Glass

127,700 tonnes of glass packaging were recovered and recycled on behalf of Repak in 2008. Glass accounted for 18% of the total weight which is the equivalent of almost 252 million glass bottles, or 171 bottles per household in Ireland.

Paper and cardboard

In 2008, Repak subsidised the recovery and recycling of 339,100 tonnes of paper and cardboard, up 18% on 2007. This accounted for 47% of the total weight of materials

funded by Repak and is the equivalent of 3.5 billion 750ml cereal boxes, translating to the equivalent of 2,429 boxes per household.

Plastic

In 2008, Repak funded the recovery and recycling of 61,100 tonnes of used plastic packaging, up 17% on 2007. Household used plastic packaging recycling increased from 23,650 tonnes in 2007 to 29,300 tonnes in 2008 with plastic bottles accounting for 67%. This 61,100 tonnes equates to enough plastic to produce a split total of 393 million plastic bottles and 3.5 billion refuse sacks.

Metal

In 2008, Repak recorded a total of 54,900 tonnes of metal packaging waste (aluminium and steel) for recycling, unchanged from 2007, the equivalent of 165 million aluminium cans, and 911 million steel cans. These materials account for approximately 8% of the total weight of used packaging materials recycled.

Wood and other packaging

130,000 tonnes of wood packaging waste was recovered in 2008 for recycling or further reuse, up 4% on 2007. This equates to 5.8 million wooden pallets.

Commenting on the results Dr. Andrew Hetherington, CEO Repak said "These figures are a great testament to the big uptake by consumers in packaging recycling especially using household collections. Last year our members contributed in excess of €29.5 million (up 8.6%) in packaging levies to support the recycling of their used packaging. However, this progress is tempered by the inability of government and enforcement Authorities to properly enforce these regulations. In the 12 years since the legislation was first introduced, we still find ourselves held back by the 40% of packaging placed on the market outside of the scheme. These are mainly by law breaking companies who continue to ignore Irish law and refuse to pay towards the recycling of the packaging they supply to their customers. This means that over €24 million that could be spent on recycling is being withheld by these companies."

Repak operates by charging its 2,333 members packaging levies for the amount and type of packaging they use on their products. These funds are then used to support recycling collections run by local authorities and waste contractors throughout the country via a network of over 1 million household "Green Bin" collections, 2,000 bring banks and 90 recycling centres, as well as supporting commercial collections.

Of the €28.1 million (up 9.5%) spent on recycling 713,000 tonnes of used packaging last year, 73% of the funds were invested in supporting household recycling while 70% of the volumes came from the commercial sector, reflecting the higher cost of recycling from the domestic sector.

Other key developments in 2008 included:

- In 2008 Repak members funded packaging recovered through RDF (Refuse Derived Fuel) for the first time. This was mainly made up of mixed plastic packaging sourced from the domestic sector.
- In 2008 Repak announced a 5 year sponsorship deal worth €1 million to support An Taisce's highly successful Green Schools programme.
- Repak with the support of the EPA further extended the Prevent and Save programme launching a number of new initiatives, which included a study on the dynamics of the packaging supply chain, publication of best practice case studies in prevention, a series of seminars, awards and publications and the launch of Ireland's first dedicated Packaging Optimisation training programme. For more log onto www.preventandsave.ie
- Repak commissioned a report by Peter Bacon and Associates into the recycling market crisis. To view it log onto www.repak.ie
- Repak contributed extensively to the Eunomia the firm appointed by Minister Gormely to report on the Minister's International Waste Review.

The full report can be downloaded from www.repak.ie.

About Repak

- Repak is a not for profit producer responsibility scheme for used packaging funded by packaging levies charged to participating members companies.
- Since 1997 Repak has invested over €160 million in supporting packaging recycling in Ireland.
- Repak have helped grow packaging recycling from under 15% in 1998 to 65% in 2008

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