

INTRODUCTION

The amount of waste we throw away keeps increasing. The Government wants to break the link between economic growth and increasing waste. Surprisingly as it may seem, for packaging this has already happened.

The number of packaged goods placed on the market is increasing. However, the tonnage of used packaging is decreasing for two reasons:

1. Commercial and environmental considerations continuously push companies to design lighter, thinner packs.
 2. We are recycling more used packaging.
- But more can be done to reduce waste. This leaflet tells you how.

WHAT THE PACKAGING LAW IS SUPPOSED TO DO

In 1997, the UK introduced a new law which affects all who make and sell packaging.

It aims to reduce waste sent to landfill by increasing the amount of used packaging that is recycled, composted or burned with energy recovery.

FACT: Of all waste sent to landfill, less than 20% is household waste. So packaging from household waste amounts to just 3% of all landfilled waste.

FACT: The UK has a long tradition of high waste management standards. Our landfill sites are among the best in Europe, and our incinerators are safe and efficient.

WHAT INDUSTRY IS DOING

- * Recycling over 30% of used packaging. This costs at least £62 million a year. By law we need to reach 50%, so costs are forecast to increase.
- * Designing packaging to balance protection of the content, the needs of consumers and the environment, legal requirements and cost.
- * Making improvements by using the Responsible Packaging Code.
- * Providing and promoting consumer information.

FACT: Packaging keeps costs down by preventing waste and making goods easier to handle, store and transport.

FACT: 90% of the energy used to get food from farms to the table is used for growing and delivering it. The remaining 10% is invested in its packaging to ensure the food is not wasted.

WHAT YOU - THE CONSUMER - CAN DO

- * Support your local recycling schemes.
- Find out what is happening in your area and join in.**
- * Re-use or recycle other waste such as newspapers and magazines.
 - * Make sure you return refillable containers.
 - * Compost your green kitchen and garden waste.
 - * Buy the correct amount of food and other goods. This helps reduce all wastes.

FACT: Some thin, lightweight packs are not worth collecting but they have other environmental advantages, for example by allowing more goods (and less packaging) to be packed in fewer lorries and so reduce transport pollution.

First fold here



What you need to know about packaging and waste

Information for consumers on recovering and recycling used packaging



INCOPEN is a research organisation set up in 1974 to study the environmental and social impact of packaging.

IndINCOPEN
Somerset Point, 6-8 Market Place
Tel Reading RG1 2EG
Tel +44 (0)118 925 5991
Fax +44 (0)118 925 5993
Email info@incpen.org
Website www.incpen.org

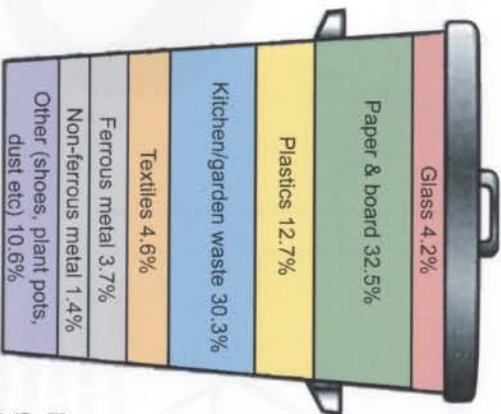
www.incpen.org

ISBN: 1 901576 45 0 April 2001

Second fold here

WHAT'S IN YOUR DUSTBIN EACH WEEK?

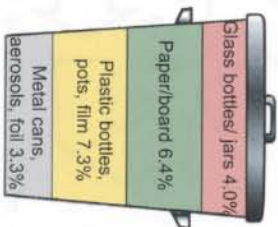
Total dustbin contents = 16kg



FACT: We also need to recycle non-packaging items. Even if all the packaging that can sensibly be recycled is removed, more than 85% of the average dustbin's contents still remains.

Source: Project Integra, Hampshire 1999. All figures are kerbside collected waste, recyclables and residuals

Used packaging = 21% of total dustbin contents



FACT: A typical family generates 3 kg - 4 kg of used packaging a week, and often the same amount of food waste.

Third fold here

METALS

Recyclable steel



Recyclable aluminium



WHAT SYMBOLS MEAN

These are some of the symbols you may have seen on the goods you buy. They are not environmental claims - they simply provide useful information.

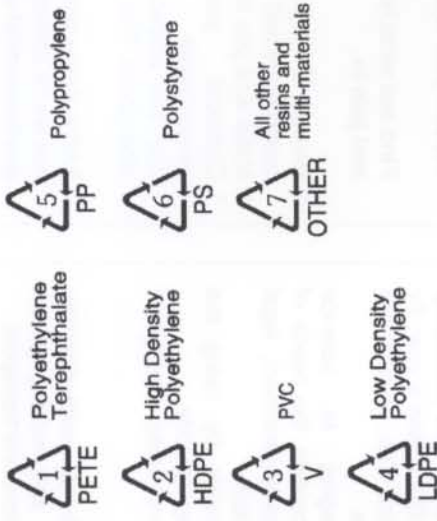
GLASS

Please put this in a Bottle Bank



PLASTICS

This identifies the type of plastic



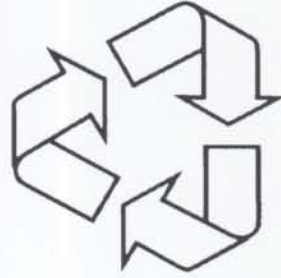
TIDYMAN

Please dispose of this carefully and thoughtfully; do not litter



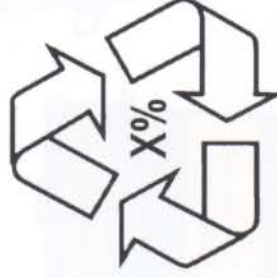
MOBIUS LOOP

This is capable of being recycled



MOBIUS LOOP WITH PERCENTAGE

This contains x% of recycled material



Use of the symbol is voluntary. Some goods contain recycled material but do not carry it. Recycled content does not mean it is necessarily better for the environment and it is often inappropriate, particularly for packaging used for food, toiletries and cosmetics.

GREEN DOT

(but can be any colour)

This shows that a fee has been paid for the recovery of the packaging in some European countries.

