



Cardboard Recycling

Cardboard can, if assessed and handled correctly, be of value and offers the potential for rebates to be paid to customers. Normally the material will need to be baled to offer the greatest value but larger quantities of loose material still holds much potential. Small bin size volumes are not of value in terms of rebates as the transport costs make this unviable at present, but we at Ash Waste Services will always offer a substantially reduced cost to collect.

An obvious use for recycled card is to make more cardboard boxes and packaging, along with other applications such as animal bedding, office supplies and even biodegradable coffins. Cardboard also makes excellent compost. Despite the fibres in cardboard becoming shorter each time they are recycled, card can be recycled four or five times.

The market for recycling card within the UK can be drastically improved. In 2004 recycled paper and cardboard provided about 74% of the source materials for the 6.2 million tonnes of paper manufactured in the UK. However, a further 7.7 million tonnes were imported.

Recycling paper and cardboard uses up to 70% less energy than the virgin processes and uses less water. This is because most of the energy used in papermaking is the pulping needed to turn wood into paper; this is immediately taken out of the system as the input changes to waste paper and cardboard, and no longer wood.

Paper is a biodegradable material and as such people don't automatically link waste paper and cardboard to environmental problems. However, being biodegradable means that when it goes to landfill it rots, producing methane. Methane is a potent greenhouse gas, 20 times more potent than carbon dioxide, and it is therefore an indirect catalyst to global warming.

In 2003/04, paper and cardboard accounted for over a quarter of all household waste collected in England. This equates to 2.5 million tonnes of paper and cardboard ending up in landfill sites every year.

Alarmingly in the UK alone over six million tonnes of paper and cardboard is being used only once despite the capacity for paper recycling. This is partly due to 40% of the UK population openly admitting that they never recycle anything.

In the future it is highly likely that the landfill tax may be extended to include paper and cardboard, to act as an incentive to recycle more paper and cardboard.



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