

Paper Towel Facts

"Most studies suggest that paper towels can dry hands efficiently, remove bacteria effectively, and cause less contamination of the washroom environment." – Mayo Clinic ¹

Preference:

 62 percent of users prefer paper towels as their hand-drying method, followed by hot air dryers at 28 percent, and cloth roller towels at 10 percent, according to a European study.²

Hygiene:

- A study published in the *Journal of Hospital Infection* found that air bacterial counts in close proximity to hand drying were 4.5-fold higher for the jet air dryer compared with the warm air dryer and 27-fold higher compared with use of paper towels.³
- Paper towels reduce the numbers of all types of bacteria on hands. By contrast, warm air dryers increase all types of bacteria on hands.⁴

Efficiency:

 After only ten seconds, paper towels achieve 90% dryness. Hot air dryers, on the other hand, take 40 seconds to achieve a similar dryness.⁴

Environment:

- Paper towels are made from recycled paper or from a renewable resource -- trees that
 are planted to meet future demand for paper and wood products and remove carbon
 dioxide from the atmosphere as they grow.
- In the U.S., twice as much wood is being grown each year as is harvested.
- On average, about two-thirds of the energy used to make paper products comes from carbon-neutral, renewable sources such as wood waste.
- 65.4 percent of the paper consumed in the United States was recovered for recycling in 2014, up from 33.5 percent in 1990.
- In 2014, 90% of the 74 mills with tissue paper capacity used some recovered paper to make new tissue products⁵, and 18 of these mills used only recovered paper.⁶
- In 2014, according to AF&PA data, U.S. tissue mills consumed 0.60 tons of recovered paper for each ton of tissue product produced.⁷
- While the tissue and paper products sector uses water to manufacture its products, it consumes a relatively minor portion of the water it withdraws, returning 88% of the water withdrawn.⁸

¹ www.mayoclinicproceedings.org/article/S0025-6196(12)00393-X/fulltext -- see abstract.

² www.europeantissue.com/pdfs/090415%20Intermetra%20Users%20preference%20study%204%20countries%202008%20Report%20June%202008.pdf -- see page 25.

www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0195670114002461 -- see findings.

⁴ www.europeantissue.com/pdfs/090402-2008%20WUS%20Westminster%20University%20hygiene%20study,%20nov2008.pdf -- see page 30.

The term "tissue products" includes "at home" (residential) and "away from home" (commercial) tissue. Away from home tissue includes restroom paper towels.

⁶ AF&PA Statistics

⁷ Derived from AF&PA's 55th Annual Fiber Consumption Report (the recovered fiber consumed in tissue paper production in 2014) and the December 2014 edition of Monthly Statistics of Paper, Paperboard & Wood Pulp (total production of tissue paper for 2014). 8 AF&PA 2014 Sustainability Report, found at www.afandpa.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/sustainability2014 pages final.pdf?sfvrsn=0. Data encompass pulp and paper products, including paper towels.