



2023 U.S. Paper and Cardboard Recycling Rates

Paper recycling rates have continuously grown over recent decades and remain consistently high. The paper industry recycles nearly 60% more paper today than it did in 1990.



Paper Recycling Rate

- In 2023, the paper recycling rate was **65% - 69%**.
- We recycled **46 million** tons of paper.
- That's **126,000** tons per day.



Cardboard Recycling Rate

- The 2023 cardboard recycling rate was **71% - 76%**.
- We recycled nearly **33 million** tons of cardboard.
- That's **90,000** tons per day.

Paper and Cardboard Recycling Streams

Paper is one of the most widely recycled materials in America. Paper and paper-based packaging is recovered for recycling from multiple places, including:

- 01 Residential:**
This includes curbside, condo/apartment building communal or drop-off recycling.
- 02 Commercial:**
This includes retail like your grocery store and big box stores. Also office buildings.
- 03 Institutional:**
This includes places like hospitals and schools.
- 04 Industrial:**
This includes factories, gas and electrical plants, and more.



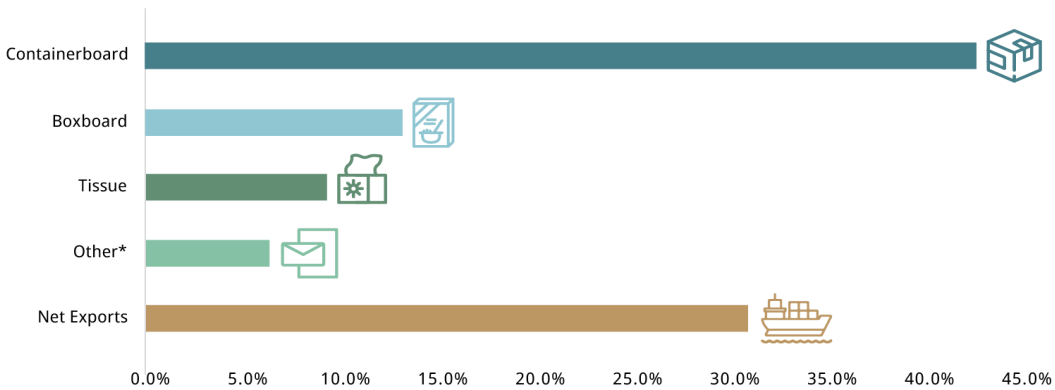
How Recycled Paper is Used

- At paper mills across the country, recycled paper is used to make the essential products millions of people rely on every day!
- In 2023, nearly half of recycled paper went into making containerboard — the material used to make cardboard boxes.
- Recycled paper makes boxes for food and medicine, tissue products like toilet paper and paper towels, and newspapers.
- Recycled paper is also exported. It's used in paper mills around the world to manufacture new products.



Where Recycled Paper Goes

More than 2/3 of recycled paper goes into new products Americans rely on



* Other includes newsprint, printing-writing, Kraft packaging and Industrial converting, construction paper and board, and molded pulp
 Source: AF&PA Statistics and U.S. Census Bureau



About AF&PA

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) serves to advance U.S. paper and wood products manufacturers through fact-based public policy and marketplace advocacy. The forest products industry is circular by nature. AF&PA member companies make essential products from renewable and recycle resources, generate renewable biomass energy and are committed to continuous improvement through the industry's sustainability initiative—*Better Practices, Better Planet 2030: Sustainable Products for a Sustainable Future.*

