

Access to Residential Recycling of Paper Packaging Materials in Canada

October 2014

Submitted to:



The Paper & Paperboard Packaging Environmental Council (PPEC)

Prepared by:



Table of Contents

Background	3
Purpose	3
Methodology	4
Key Findings	4
National Access Rates.....	4
Provincial Access Rates.....	6
Provincial Summaries	7
British Columbia	7
Alberta	8
Saskatchewan	9
Manitoba	10
Ontario	11
Quebec	12
New Brunswick	13
Nova Scotia.....	14
Prince Edward Island	15
Newfoundland and Labrador.....	16
Material Summaries	17
Old Corrugated Cardboard	17
Boxboard	18
Kraft Paper.....	19
Historic Access Rates 2009-2014	20
Historic Rates by Material	20
Historic Rates by Province	20
Appendix A: Keywords/Terms Used to Determine Acceptability of a Material in a Recycling Program	23

Background

During the past two decades, the popularity of recycling has grown dramatically. Recycling programs are now in place in most major Canadian cities. The level of recycling, however, varies quite widely from province to province. While some of this variability can be explained by differences in levels of household income, education, and age of residents, one of the key factors influencing recycling rates in Canada is whether people have access to recycling programs.

Access rates for various types of packaging are constantly changing, and the specific list of materials accepted in a residential recycling program varies from municipality to municipality. As extended producer responsibility (EPR) schemes proliferate across the country, it is becoming increasingly important for manufacturers and retailers of packaged food and consumer goods to know what percentage of Canadians have access to recycling programs for the packaging they place on the market.

In this report, having “access” to recycling means the opportunity is there for consumers to recycle their packaging through residential curbside recycling, municipal drop-off recycling depots, deposit-return programs for beverage containers, or return-to-retail (for empty beverage containers only).

Purpose

This report aims to provide the Paper and Paperboard Packaging Environment Council (PPEC) with information on what percentage of Canadians have access to recycling the packaging materials put on the market by its member stewards. The list of materials researched by CM Consulting is as follows:

- Old corrugated cardboard (OCC)
- Boxboard
- Kraft paper

Methodology

In order to estimate recycling access rates for each of the subject packaging materials, CM Consulting began by determining the population residing within each municipality, regional district, or subdivision having a defined area and common recycling program in Canada. This information was obtained using 2011 Statistics Canada census data.

The second step involved visiting the municipal/regional websites of each of the roughly 400 defined areas to determine which materials were accepted in each recycling program. Some degree of interpretation was necessary to complete this task. For example, if a material was not listed – either explicitly or implicitly – it was assumed that it was not accepted for recycling in that municipality.

It is important to note that this study only covers municipalities/districts with a population over 5000, leaving a small portion of Canada's population – about 1,048,804 people listed as living in "other small communities" (representing 3.1% of the national population) – unstudied. As a result, it is possible that the access rates reported here are actually underestimations (3% lower than the actual rates), particularly if those municipalities/districts not included in this study are recycling those materials. To illustrate, this would mean that the 96% access rate for OCC could be as high as 99%.

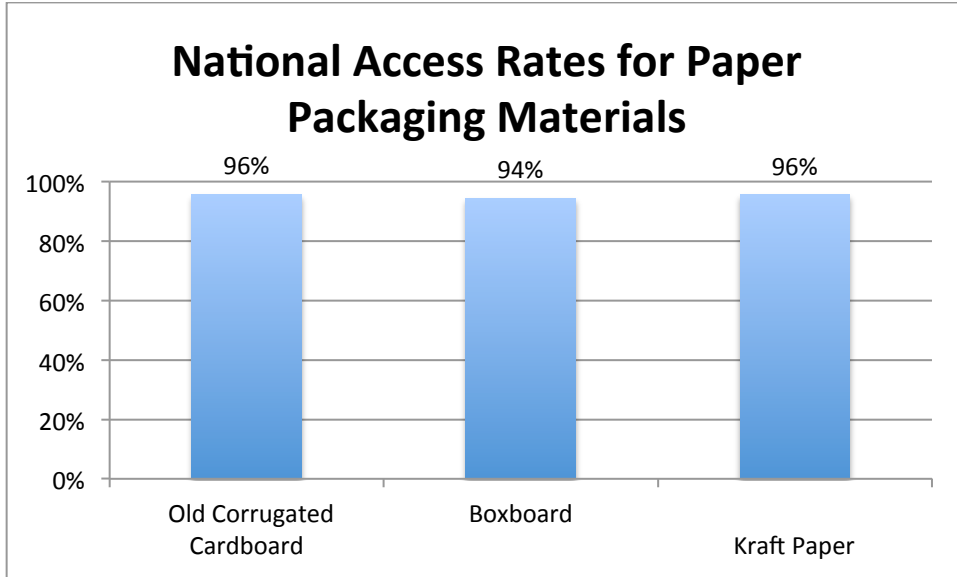
Key Findings

National Access Rates

The national access rates for the paper materials researched for PPEC are extremely high when compared to most other fibre, plastic and glass materials. OCC (Old Corrugated Cardboard), boxboard, and kraft paper are usually part of the first set of materials to be accepted in a municipal recycling program when it begins, which means that nearly every mature and new program in the country accepts these.

For both OCC and kraft paper, the national access rate is 96%. The access rate for Boxboard is slightly lower at 94%, however, this is deceiving because in Nova Scotia there are programs that encourage residents to compost boxboard, meaning it is often diverted but not recycled.

CM Consulting expects these may be underestimates of the actual rates since it is likely that some municipalities with populations less than 5,000 recycle these materials as well.



Appendix A: Keywords/Terms Used to Determine Acceptability of a Material in a Recycling Program

Old Corrugated Cardboard

OCC, cardboard, boxes, corrugated boxes, all paper, all fibre.

Boxboard

Cereal boxes, Kleenex boxes, cookie boxes, food boxes, boxboard, all paper, all fibre.

Kraft Paper

Kraft Paper, paper grocery bags, all paper, cardboard (unless corrugated cardboard only is specifically described), all fibre

NOT ACCEPTED

Nearly every municipal/regional website has a 'not accepted' list. This is always checked. If there is a conflict, it will be resolved by the definition of the **not accepted** item. For example, if a recycling program lists boxes as accepted but then specifically lists "cereal boxes" as not accepted, then the researcher enters boxboard as a "No".