

When the green bin is collected by your local authority, it makes its way to EnviroSort. EnviroSort is a Commingled Materials Reclamation Facility (CMRF). Your recycling is sorted into the key material types such as glass; paper, card and cartons; steel tins; aluminium cans; and plastics. Once sorted, each material type then leaves EnviroSort for reprocessors within the U.K.

For this month/issue we're looking at paper, paper-based cartons and cardboard packaging. Paper, card and paper-based cartons are the second material type to be separated from the commingled recycling. You can recycle printed paper, newspapers, magazines, small booklets, junk mail and leaflets, letters and envelopes (with windows but not padded), non-glittery/non-shiny greetings cards, non-shiny wrapping paper, cardboard boxes, cardboard sleeves, paper bags, egg boxes, tubes and cartons.

Paper, card and cartons have to be placed into the green bin clean, dry and flat, so please flatten cereal boxes, egg boxes, cartons (you can leave spouts on) and toilet roll inserts. Paper, card and cartons are sorted from the rest of your recycling by a specialist machine, **The Ballistic Separator**, which separates 2D items like paper, card and cartons from 3D items such as tins, cans and plastics. It is a "walking floor" made up of moving paddles at a 35° angle. 2D/Flat items such as paper, card and cartons go up the ballistic separator and 3D items go down the Ballistic Separator. (This is why we ask for tins, cans and plastics not to be flattened.)



*The Ballistic Separator*

**Paper can be recycled between 4 and 7 times.** New paper has long paper fibres. Each time paper is recycled those fibres get shorter until the fibres are too short to withstand another reprocessing. At this end-stage, paper is manufactured into low-grade paper products such as tissues, paper towels, kitchen roll and toilet paper, which can't be recycled in the green bin.

The U.K. uses over 227,000 miles of wrapping paper every year. (That's around 18 feet/4.5 metres per person.) To put this into perspective, the moon is 235,855 miles away. Much of this wrapping paper can't be recycled due to the shiny coatings which are contaminants, as these can't be removed during reprocessing.

Try the scrunch test. Scrunch up a piece of wrapping paper, if it stays scrunched up, it can be recycled, if it unscrunches, it can't. Please don't buy recyclable paper and recycle it after one use, try to reuse it first, even non-recyclable paper can be reused. When you do recycle recyclable wrapping paper, please remove all tape which is a contaminant and it could also come off during the process and cause blockages within the machinery.

Shiny and glittery greetings cards cannot be placed in the green bin as the coatings are contaminants and cannot be removed. Please rip these in half with the shiny front going in the black bin and the back section can be placed in the green bin.

Wallpaper cannot be recycled in the green bin due to the patterns and coatings used in its manufacture. Wallpaper paste is also a contaminant.

Receipts and greaseproof/baking paper can't be recycled. Receipts have a thermal coating and greaseproof paper has a silicone coating which makes it non-stick. Both these coatings can't be removed.

Shredded paper can be recycled inside another paper product i.e., paper bag, envelope or cereal box. Loose shredded paper is a major contaminant of glass as the pieces can fall through with the glass on the Glass Breaker. (Once glass is received at the glass factory it is washed, shredded paper would pulp down and cause blockages.) Shredded paper cannot be recycled in a plastic bag as soft plastics are not recyclable via a green bin and this would be rejected.

Fancy a coffee? Over 7 million disposable coffee cups are thrown away each day in the U.K. Coffee cups can't go into the green bin even if they are marked as recyclable. The thin plastic lining that ensures they are leak-proof is hard to separate from the paper. They have to be reprocessed at a specialist reprocessor that only deals with coffee cups and similar packaging. As EnviroSort process over 75,000 tonnes of green bin recycling every year, there is not the capacity to handpick these items out. Disposable coffee cups also have to be made using fresh paper, recycled paper can't be used as there is a contamination risk to the food or liquid within the packaging.

Unwanted books can be taken to a charity shop or passed on to friends. Hardback books cannot be placed in a green bin due to the hardback covers. Small paperbacks are able to be recycled via a green bin if they cannot be reused. Many HRCs now have book banks.

The maximum size of box or cardboard to put in the green bin is A2 (42 x 59.4 cm), any larger and it's too big for the conveyer belt. Oversized cardboard is the biggest cause of blockages at EnviroSort. Cut it or rip it to size and remove any plastic film, windows and sticky tape. Don't fold it to size as it will flop open when it's unloaded from the lorry.

All recycling needs to be clean and dry. For example, food, paint and grease are contaminants that can't be removed. Greasy pizza boxes for example, cannot be recycled as the oil cannot be removed. Bin lids need to be closed.

Recycling one tonne of paper saves seventeen trees and saves 38% CO<sub>2</sub> compared with manufacturing virgin paper. EnviroSort sent out over 34,737 tonnes of paper, card, cartons and cardboard for reprocessing last year from Herefordshire and Worcestershire's green bin collections. This saves 590,529 fully-grown trees every year. That's about ¾ of a tree for every Herefordshire and Worcestershire resident.