

## **Irish Workers Abandon Home Recycling Habits at Work, Risk Their Colleague's Rage**

- **Repak Recycling Week kicks off today Monday 4<sup>th</sup> of October focusing on recycling in the office/workplace**

### **Repak research shows**

- **51% of your work colleagues are infuriated by your poor recycling habits, but only a third will confront you**
- **Irish recycler's show split personality between home and work recycling habits, 54% of workers are not recycling regularly from office kitchen versus 2% in the home kitchen**
- **1/3 believe recycling in the office is not their responsibility and 29% claim don't think about recycling in the workplace**
- **Recycling around the office worsening as people recycling from less places and recycling items less often**
  - **Claimed Recycling rates in the office kitchen/canteen fall from 53% in 2010 to 46% in 2011 office desk 28% (down from 38%),**
  - **Claimed recycling rates of Plastic bottles recycling falls from 58% to 41%, drinks cans decrease to 35% (was 47%), Office paper Recycled**
- **Recycling around the home improving, as recyclers recycling from more rooms and increase in brown bin penetration reaches 48% of all households up from 19% in 2008**

**Dublin 03 10 2011:** Repak warns work colleagues angered by people's lack of recycling in the work place. Irish working people adopt split personalities to their work /life recycling habits.

According to recent research by Repak for the launch of Repak Recycling Week on October 3<sup>rd</sup> conducted by MRBI amongst a representative sample of 1,000 adults, 51% of office workers find the poor recycling habits of their colleagues a source of major irritation. However, only 32% of these people have ever confronted a colleague over their poor recycling habits in the office.

Most surprisingly only 33% of people claimed to regularly recycle office paper in the workplace. On what is the impediment to recycling in the workplace, 30% of office workers believe it is not their responsibility to recycle, while 29% claim they don't think about recycling. This is despite the fact that 80% claim to have access to some sort of recycling collection.

This split in Irish peoples recycling personality was reflected as the survey showed 68% claimed to recycle more at home than in work. When questioned on where and what items they regularly recycle between work and home:

- 54% claimed they do not regularly recycle in the workplace kitchen/canteen while only 2% do not recycle in the home kitchen.
- While 82% will happily claim to recycle their plastic drinks bottles at home, only 41% will recycle similar bottles in the offices. This is despite the fact that 42% of those surveyed will bring these into the office.
- 77% will recycle milk or juice cartons at home, but only 30% will recycle these in the office.
- 73% will recycle drink cans at home, but only half or 35% will do the same at work

Worryingly the research has shown a dis improvement as people are recycling from less places and recycling items less often in workplace. Claimed Recycling rates in the office kitchen/canteen fall from 53% in 2010 to 46% in 2011 office desk 28% (down from 38%), Claimed recycling of Plastic bottles falls from 58% to 41%, drinks cans decrease to 35% (was 47%).

On the contrary recycling around the home is improving with people recycling from more areas of the home as recycling from the bathroom improves at 53% up from 43% in 2010 and recycling in the bedroom improves to 35% from 30% in 2010. Also 48% of all households now have access to Brown bins up from 19% in 2008, giving people an opportunity to recycle more from the home.

"More needs to be done to encourage people to recycle more in the workplace. It is ironic that while most people recycle at home, they unintentionally abdicate responsibility in the work place. It is almost as if the work life balance has split their recycling personality," said Dr. Andrew Hetherington, CEO Repak. "Companies can do more to encourage people to recycle more, by educating them and showing them that it is their responsibility in the workplace. By educating your own employees as to how to recycle more in the work place employer can improve staff morale and importantly help reduce their waste costs."

### **Activities through the week**

This year which is the 11<sup>th</sup> Repak Recycling Week, there are a number of Recycling initiatives being run to help highlight recycling during the week. Initiatives during the week include:

- Repak has launch of its Recyclemore search application for iPhone which enables people through their iPhone to locate through GPS their nearest recycling facilities when out and about. This can be filtered by location and material type and once a facility has been selected it will map your route from your current location to the selected recycling facility.
- iPhone 4 competition on our Facebook Repak Recyclemore page to promote the launch of the iPhone app.
- Free Waste Electrical Electronic Equipment collections being run by WEEE Ireland (see Freecycle for more details)
- Repak Members Conference 6<sup>th</sup> October

- Repak Recycling awards ceremony celebrating best practice in packaging prevention and recycling, including WEEE and batteries
- Schools Colouring competitions and classroom activity

Visit [Repak.ie](http://Repak.ie) or [Recyclemore.ie](http://Recyclemore.ie) to find out more about the week.

## **Repak Recycling Week Tips:**

### **1. Packaging Thrift.**

Check for products with less packaging and use re-usable plates, cups and bags. Buy vegetables loose. Put leftover turkey and ham into reusable lunch boxes or containers with lids instead of using non-recyclable aluminum foil or plastic film. A lot of companies have made great strides in reducing the amount of packaging they use in product. For example, did you know the steel in baked bean cans now weigh today only 53% of what it did on the 1970's dinner table (210g versus 113g for the same amount of beans).

### **2. Find your nearest Recycling Centre or Bring Bank.**

You may be surprised at the wide variety of materials they can accept and most have extended opening hours over Repak Recycle Week. Visit [www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie) or check your local paper or for further details.

### **3. Be Clean.**

Wash 'n' squash Tetra Pak containers. Rinse out bottle and cans, remove lids and squash plastic containers to save space. Remember don't litter at bring banks. Take home any boxes or containers you used to bring materials to your local bring bank in.

### **4. Recycle used packaging from around the workplace**

Take your household recycling habits with you into work and recycle more of your used packaging in work from your desk, the office kitchen/canteen, bathrooms and photocopy/print room.

### **5. Use Re-usable Bags.**

Make sure to use reusable bags when visiting your Recycling Centre or Bring Bank, especially if you're wash 'n' squash your used packaging container. Often people use cardboard boxes, which can get soggy and unusable. Without realising, unfortunately, some people leave these beside Bring Bank and at Recycling Centres – this is littering and makes everyone's job harder.

### **6. Recycle used batteries.**

Collect up all the used batteries. Consider purchasing a battery re-charger and rechargeable batteries for battery operated toys and gadgets. All outlets that sell batteries will be required to provide receptacles in store for customers to return their used batteries for recycling. Alternatively look up [www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie) to find your nearest recycling centre that accept batteries.

## **About Repak**

- Repak is a not for profit producer responsibility scheme for used packaging funded by packaging levies charged to participating members companies.
- Since 1997 Repak has invested €225 million in supporting packaging recycling in Ireland.
- In total Repak have diverted over 5.7 million tonnes of used packaging from landfill since 1998.
- Repak have helped grow packaging recovery including recycling from under 15% in 1998 to nearly 65% in 2009
- Ireland is now ranked 8<sup>th</sup> in terms of packaging recycling amongst the EU 27.

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