

Christmas Binge Sees Households Consume 29 Litres of Wine and Beer, 44 Litres of Soft Drinks and 2 Kilos of Sweets

(21.12.04) The Christmas celebrations this year will see each Irish household consume an average of over 11 litres of wine, 18 litres of beer, 1.5 litres of spirits, 44 litres of soft drinks and 2 kilos of sweets and chocolates, according to figures produced by Repak as parts of this year's Repak Green Christmas Campaign supported by Race Against Waste.

Nationwide this will see the emptying of:

- 20 million wine bottles
- 48 million aluminium beer cans
- 35 million soft drinks cans
- 13 million beer bottles
- 45 million plastic drinks bottles
- 2.5 million spirit bottles
- 4 million cardboard sweet boxes
- 2.5 million cardboard toy boxes
- 4 million rolls of wrapping paper

Cardboard and paper packaging alone from gifts and other items consumed over the Christmas period mount up to almost 20,000 tonnes or an average of 15.5 kilos per household. It is also enough wine bottles, if recycled, to light one light bulb in every household in Ireland for two and a half days or if they were stretched out end to end to cover a distance of 6,000 kilometres, enough to go around the entire coastline of New Zealand or to go from Dublin to New York with plenty to spare. If all the wrapping paper was laid out side by side it would cover an area of 89 kilometres by 89 kilometres, which is enough to completely cover half the size of Leinster. All the alcoholic and non-alcoholic drink consumed would cover, to a depth of 10 centimetres, every football pitch in both the professional football leagues in England and Scotland (over 120 football pitches) or a distance of 1 kilometre by 1 kilometre. This liquid alone would also fill 64 Olympic sized swimming pools.

The figures were released today to mark the beginning of the Repak Green Christmas Campaign supported by the Race Against Waste, which encourages householders to embrace the recycling habit by making it as easy as possible to recycle the 30% increase in used packaging that occurs at Christmas time. The nationwide network of 80 special Repak Green Christmas recycling centres is being organised in conjunction with 32 local authorities (details on www.repak.ie, www.raceagainstwaste.ie).

"We all produce extra waste over Christmas so it is a perfect time to get into the Race Against Waste at home," said Dick Roche, TD, Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government. "More things need to be reused, recycled and composted by more people, more often if we are to win the Race Against Waste," concluded Minister Roche.

"A growing number of materials can now be recycled, such as paper, cardboard, cans, plastic bottles, milk/juice cartons as well as glass bottles and jars. Furthermore, in

January most of the local authorities are providing recycling facilities for Christmas trees," continued Minister Roche.

Last year the Repak Green Christmas Campaign helped recycle over 18,000 tonnes or approximately 20% of all used packaging which would have otherwise gone to landfill. This was an increase of 55% on the amount of material collected for recycling over the previous year. This year the campaign will be targeting to recycle in excess of 20,000 tonnes of used packaging from the domestic sector. This is enough packaging material to fill over 4,000 trucks which end to end would stretch in a traffic jam of 30 kilometres, a distance from Dublin to Naas.

Commenting on this year's campaign Andrew Hetherington CEO, Repak said: "This is the first Christmas period that householders will be facing pay per use/pay by weight bin charges. By recycling all their used Christmas packaging, reusing where possible and starting to compost householders could cut by up to half the amount of waste they leave out in their regular bins. Celebrating Christmas does not have to be at the expense of the environment. In addition to items that many people already recycle such as bottles and cans we are calling on people to remember to recycle their wrapping paper, used boxes from presents and sweets rather than dumping or burning them. With the recent strong growth in recycling collection schemes recycling has never been easier."

The 80 Repak Green Christmas centres will accept a wider range of materials than normal and will open for longer hours to make it as easy as possible to recycle. The initiative is supported by a nationwide advertising which also promotes the existing network of almost 2,000 bring banks for the recycling of aluminium drink cans and glass bottles and jars, as well as the dry recycling household collections that service nearly 50% of all households in Ireland.

The campaign, running from the 22nd December to the 10th January, will see 80 Green Christmas Recycling centres set-up throughout the country, to which householders can bring the excess cardboard, paper, glass, plastic and cans generated over the Christmas period to be recycled. The campaign is in its fourth year, having expanded from 1 participating local authority covering 11 recycling centres in 2001 to all local authorities in 2003. Full details of opening hours of the Green Christmas centres and materials handled are available at www.repak.ie.

The 12 Days of Green Christmas

Day 1 **Boxes** Buy separate boxes for storage of your used glass bottles and jars and cans, newspapers etc.

Day 2 **Compost Bin** Put a compost bin in your garden for kitchen vegetable waste and garden waste.

Day 3 **Organise Household Bins** Put three bins in the kitchen: one for recyclables; one for compostable vegetable waste; one for general waste. Organise for storage space in backgarden/room.

Day 4 **Check** for products with less packaging, use re-usable plates, cups and bags. Buy vegetables loose.

Day 5 **Find your nearest recycling centre** Check local paper or visit www.repak.ie for details of the nearest Repak Green Christmas Centre or Bring Bank.

Day 6 **Christmas wrapping** Gather all the wrapping paper, cardboard boxes from presents into large bags for recycling or reuse.

Day 7 **Morning After** Gather up all plastic/glass bottles and aluminium cans in separate bags or bins.

Day 8 **Wash 'n' Squash** Rinse out bottle and cans, remove lids and squash plastic containers to save space.

Day 9 **Card Recycling** Collect all Christmas cards together, which can also be recycled.

Day 10 **Recycle used batteries** Collect up all the used batteries Look up www.repak.ie to find your nearest recycling centre.

Day 11 **Christmas decorations** Take down decorations and tree.

Day 12 **Christmas tree Recycling** Bring Christmas tree to local Christmas tree recycling centre.

About Repak

Repak is a not-for-profit members based compliance scheme established under a voluntary agreement between industry and the Department of the Environment and Local Government. It was established as industry's response to the obligations placed on Ireland by the EU directive on Packaging Waste (94/62/EC) and is the only government approved compliance scheme under the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Repak succeeded in reaching and exceeding Ireland's EU National Packaging Recovery and Recycling Target of 25% of packaging waste in 2001.

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