

“Working 9 to 5” but Irish people are not recycling enough in these hours

- Repak Recycling Week kicks off today Monday October 4th with a focus on Recycling in the Office

Repak Research shows:

- 47% don't recycle regularly in the workplace kitchen/canteen versus 3% in the household kitchen
- 62% do not recycle regularly from the office/desk
- 42% not regularly recycling their plastic bottles and 55% not recycling their used take away coffee cups in the workplace.
- Over 52% of people bring plastic bottled products into the workplace with 43% buying take away coffee
- 55% of people surveyed recycle more in the home than in the workplace
- In the home recycling continues to improve with 40% of people reported to having brown bins for recycling food waste versus 88% who have recyclable bins
- 83% claim not to regularly recycle their used food tins in work and 55% don't recycle their used take away coffee cups.

Research carried for Repak Recycling Week shows that Irish people have much better recycling habits in the home than the workplace. The research of over 1,000 adults showed that 47% of those working do not regularly recycling in the workplace kitchen/canteen compared to only 3% who do not regularly recycle in the household kitchen. Meanwhile 62% do not regularly recycle from the office/desk and 88% do not recycling from the stationary room.

When questioned what items they regularly recycle, Plastic drinks bottles were the most recycled item in the workplace at 58% but this was far below the 87% that was reported to be recycled at home. 83% claim not to regularly recycle their used food tins in work and 55% don't recycle their used take away coffee cups. A similar pattern was evident in the differential between recycled milk containers which showed 49% recycled in work compared with 85% at home, soft drinks cans at 47% in work versus 83% at home.

Despite the low recycling rates reported by Irish workers many are admitting to bringing packaged products into the workplace with over 52% buying or bringing plastic bottled products into work and 43% buying take away coffee followed by 40% who buy pre-packaged sandwiches. All of the associated packaging on these items can and are fully recyclable

When questioned about recycling habits at home versus the office 55% reported that they recycle more at home than in work with only 15% claiming to recycle more in the office.

Commenting Dr. Andrew Hetherington, CEO Repak said, "This research shows that people are not bringing their good recycling habits in the household into their workplaces. This is of concern as we face ever increasing packaging recycling targets. However more concerning for companies is they could be risking potential prosecution as it is illegal for organisations to knowingly dump recyclable packaging. With some simple changes in the office practice much can be done as witnessed in home recycling. More importantly companies can save on their waste charges by implementing recycling systems and also help improve the work environment for the employees. "

In order to help people recycle better in the office Repak has produced a series of recycling posters that can be put up in the workplace. The posters are available from www.recyclemore.ie.

In order to recycle better in the office companies should

- Ensure that your waste contractor is offering you a separate dry recyclables collection
- Elect a recycling or eco office champion who takes responsibility for recycling in the office
- Install a separate bins for dry recyclables at desks, in the kitchen/canteen and in bathrooms and at water dispensers etc
- Educate people to why you are installing recyclable bins in work – reminding them they do it at home.
- Reuse incoming boxes for outgoing deliveries
- Remove individual printers from people desks and install shared printers this will encourage people to print less and Proof-read documents and read emails on screen rather than printing them out
- Shred all office confidential paper
- Don't scrunch up used paper for recycling leave as flat sheets as this uses less space than crumpled/scrunched used paper.
- Use reusable cups in your office kitchen along with re-useable plates and cutlery.
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To encourage people to recycle more of their used coffee cups Repak have linked up with Insomnia coffee company (the largest coffee chain in Ireland and Repak participating member) to offer people the opportunity to win Insomnia coffee for a year and daily prizes of Insomnia coffee for themselves and 9 work colleagues during Repak Recycling Week.

Recycling in the home

In addition to the high recycling habits at home 40% of people reported to having brown bins for recycling food waste versus 88% who have recyclable bins. Fruit and vegetable peelings recycling scored highest at 90%, followed by cooked food at 70%, uncooked food at 74% and grass cuttings at 69%. This is a positive development with the high government biodegradable waste targets. Recycling from household recyclable bins now equates to the same rate of recycling from Bring Banks showing that recycling of plastic, aluminium, and cardboard has caught up with the historic high rates of recycling of glass.

This year the 10th Repak Recycling Week is running a series of initiatives to encourage people to bring the good recycling habits they have developed at home into the work place and outside the home. Initiatives during the week include:

- Free Garmin give away to celebrate Launch of a recycling locations on Garmin Sat Nav maps.
- Free Insomnia Coffee Cup recycling promotion on facebook
- Free WEEE recycling Collection days
- Schools Colouring competition and Classroom activity programs
- Series of downloadable posters for the office.
- National awareness advertising campaign.

Visit Repak.ie or Recyclemore.ie to find out more about Repak Recycling Week.

Notes to Editor:

Top forgotten Recycling packaging items from the workplace

1. Steel Food Tins 83% don't recycle regularly
2. Soup cartons 78% don't recycle regularly
3. Plastic clear fruit or salad bowls (rinsed) 63% don't recycle
4. Pre packaged sandwich wrappers 62% don't recycle
5. Disposable coffee cups 55% don't recycle
6. Glass bottles/jars 55% don't recycle
7. Soft Drinks Cans 53% don't recycle regularly
8. Plastic Drinks bottles 42% don't recycle regularly

This Repak Recycling Week we are looking to encourage people to recycle more in the workplace by taking their good recycling habits from the household into the work place and recycle more by recycling from more areas of the office and by recycling often forgotten items such as:

From the kitchen/canteen recycle your used breakfast and lunch packaging such as:

- Food tins
- Cereal Boxes
- Milk, Juice and Soup Cartons
- Plastic fruit or salad bowls (cleaned)
- Used Pizza Boxes (remove heavy food residue)
- Recycle used sauce and jam jars (rinsed)

From your office/desk recycle your used

- Bottled water or smoothie drinks containers
- Take away coffee cups (rinsed)
- Drinks cans
- Used Magazines and paper

From the workplace bathroom/showers recycle your used

- Toilet roll cores
- Soap dispenser bottles
- Shampoo and shower gel bottles
- Bleach/detergent bottles

From the Stationary/Photocopy room

- Recycle used photocopy paper boxes
- Recycle used stationary boxes from pens, paper clips or staples
- Recycle used printer cartridges
- Recycle your used wrapping paper.

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 aluminium 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 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. From the 26th of September 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 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 €200 million in supporting packaging recycling in Ireland.
- In total Repak have diverted over 5.0 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 8th in terms of packaging recycling amongst the EU 27.

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