

Don't Let Packaging Snowball Out of Control this Christmas

- **4 bottles of wine, 9 beer cans, 7 plastic drinks bottles and nearly 1 roll of wrapping paper used EVERY SECOND by consumers over Christmas period***
- **82,000 tonnes of additional packaging will be generated over Christmas period**
- **23,000 tonnes of paper and cardboard the weight of 511 articulated trucks**
- **44 million litres of alcohol, enough to fill Lough Neagh 12 times over**
- **Each household will generate circa 55 kilos of packaging waste**
- **Repak set target to recycle 45% of the used packaging**

20.12.07; With the Festive season in full swing, presents being bought and wrapped, everyone drinking and eating their fill, the packaging mountain is already beginning to build up. Repak would like to remind all consumers to prevent packaging from snowballing out of control this Christmas and be sure to use their local recycling facilities to recycle as much of their used packaging as possible. Irish Consumers go through an estimated; 4 bottles of wine, 9.6 beer cans, 5 soft drinks cans, 7.8 plastic drinks bottles and nearly 1 roll of wrapping paper **PER SECOND** over the festive period. In total over Green Christmas Irish consumers will use enough glass wine and beer bottles to create a chain 9,500 km in length, a chain long enough to stretch from Dublin to Tokyo. We will use 23,000 tonnes of cardboard and paper the same average weight as 511 fully loaded articulated trucks and we will drink enough alcohol to fill the great Lough Neagh 12 times over. In response to this festive indulging Repak is calling on all householders to

maximise the use of their green bins and jingle all the way down to the recycling centres and bottle banks as they look towards an even Greener Repak Green Christmas in 2007.

This year Repak Green Christmas runs from the 23rd of December 2007 to the 4th of January 2008 so make sure your house is ready for the 12 Recycling days of Green Christmas. According to research undertaken by Repak, each household will generate circa 54 kilos or 80,000 tonnes of used packaging in total, over the Christmas period. There is a 30 per cent increase in the overall amount of used packaging at this time of year. It is estimated there are 164 million drink containers – including alcoholic and non-alcoholic cans and bottles going to be consumed this year due to the numerous Christmas parties and nights out over the festive season. Repak is aiming to collect and recycle 45% of this used packaging, generated over the holiday period. This is equivalent to 24 kilos per household or 35,000 tonnes in total of used packaging. Last year Repak supported the recycling of nearly 32,000 tonnes of used packaging, which was 10% up on the previous year. Repak Green Christmas is encouraging householders to think green and remember to recycle all the extra waste produced by these Christmas festivities.

Commenting on the extra effort required over the Christmas period, Andrew Hetherington, CEO of Repak said “What we have seen previously is that, with some encouragement, consumers react enthusiastically to the recycling call for a Repak Green Christmas. We are asking householders this year to examine their bin and to recycle items they have never recycled before, such as mince pie trays or used Christmas crackers, selection and chocolate boxes and biscuit tins. Consumers are the front line of recycling and their enthusiasm and participation is crucial in helping to reduce our Christmas waste mountain.”

Repak Green Christmas is supported in part by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government under the *Race Against Waste* campaign. Minister John Gormley, T.D., thanked householders for their recycling efforts over the past year. “Recycling performance has gone through the roof in recent years and people in Ireland can be rightly proud of the part they are playing in helping the environment by using their green bins or bringing packaging waste to recycling centres”, the Minister remarked, “But I would ask everyone to make a New Year’s Resolution to use less

packaging in 2008. I have recently asked supermarkets and other retailers to look at the amount of packaging on their products but we need to be aware that the choices we make as consumers can be an important element in preventing waste”.

The Repak Green Christmas campaign is in its seventh year and Repak now work with all local authorities around the country involving over 90 recycling centres nationwide. During December and January Repak will run a nationwide TV, national and local print, Outdoor shopper lights and radio advertising campaigns to support the call to recycle and also to encourage people to visit their recycling centres. They have also added Green Christmas information to their BEBO page and Blog where people can read more on various hints and tips around recycling at this time of the year. Most recycling centres have in many cases specific opening hours due to the holiday period and will accept a wider range of materials than the normal bring banks. In addition to this, the existing network of nearly 2,200 Bring Banks and kerbside collection systems reaching in excess of 950,000 households will help to facilitate the recycling of much of the Christmas packaging. Full details of Green Christmas recycling centres, their opening hours, local contractor collection information and Christmas tree recycling drop off points is available at www.repak.ie.

Ends

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Notes to Editor

*Calculations for the per second consumption were worked on the basis of the amount of packaging used from the start of November to end of December and divided by the amount of seconds there are in that time period

Key Green Christmas Statistics:

Of packaging waste alone, it is estimated that the increased consumer activity generates an additional 80,000 tonnes of waste or 170 million used packaging containers. This is equivalent to:

- 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

Green Christmas Interesting facts

- Recycling just one plastic bottle saves enough energy to power a 60 watt bulb for 6 hours
- It takes just 25 two litre plastic beverage bottles to make one adult size fleece jacket
- Each household will generate circa 55 kilos of used packaging or 82,000 tonnes of packaging will be consumed over the Christmas period
- Repak are targeting to collect and recycle 45% of the Christmas packaging waste generated over the holiday period. This is equivalent to 23 kilos per household or 32,000 tonnes of used packaging
- 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 cover half the size of Leinster.

About Repak

Repak is a not-for-profit voluntary member's based packaging recycling 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 packaging 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 and is well on the way to Achieving our 2005 EU packaging recovery target of 50%.

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