



FACT SHEET

What “recyclable” means

Most materials are *technically* recyclable. Whether they are actually sent for recycling or recycled into something else is sometimes an entirely different story (see [Clarifying some of the confusion over “recyclability”](#)) and the more recent blog “[Nothing is 100% recyclable or 100% compostable](#)”.

In Canada, use of the term “Recyclable” on a package is governed by the environmental labeling guidelines developed by the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) and the Competition Bureau, an independent law enforcement agency of the Government of Canada that protects and promotes competitive markets and enables informed consumer choice. Section 10.7 of these guidelines for industry and advertisers covers what and how claims for recyclability can be made. See <http://www.competitionbureau.gc.ca>

In effect, use of the term “Recyclable” in Canada is linked to the percentage of Canadians who have access to recycling in the marketplace in which the package is sold. If 50% or more of the population in the marketplace in which the package is sold have *access* to recycling (whether curbside, apartment, or depot) then the advertiser can make what is called an “unqualified” claim of recyclability. If, however, less than 50% of the population has access, that claim must be “qualified” (that is, specific written statements naming geographic areas must be printed next to the word “Recyclable” or the Recyclable logo indicating that access to recycling is limited. The document noted above gives examples of the preferred wording to be used.



How does paper packaging rate?: According to an independent [study](#) virtually 100% of Canadians now have access to the recycling of corrugated boxes, boxboard, or paperboard cartons, and kraft paper bags and sacks. PPEC has posted a [blog](#) on this subject.

For Corrugated: At least 96% of Canadians have access to the household recycling of common corrugated.

For Boxboard: At least 94% of Canadians have access to the household recycling of common boxboard.

For Paper Bags: At least 96% of Canadians have access to the household recycling of paper bags and sacks.