

# Waste Packaging Statistics for Ireland

## Introduction

The EPA produces national statistics on waste generation and management to meet legislative reporting obligations and inform national policy development.

This release reports information on the recovery and recycling of waste packaging in Ireland in 2013, the most recent reference year reported to the European Commission.<sup>1</sup>

Packaging is used to contain, protect and present goods and is made from materials such as glass, paper & cardboard, metals, plastic, wood, textiles and composite materials (e.g. milk and juice cartons). Virtually all packaging eventually becomes waste. The EU Packaging Directive (94/62/EC as amended) seeks to promote the recovery and recycling of packaging waste to reduce its environmental impact and encourage resource efficiency.

## Key points

- Ireland met the EU targets for recovery and recycling of packaging waste in 2013.
- New ambitious targets for recycling of packaging waste are proposed under the European Commission's Circular Economy Package for 2025 and 2030.

## Data methodology

The methodology for the estimation of packaging waste generated was reviewed and revised for 2013 data reporting due to significant changes in the management of residual waste streams in Ireland since the methodology was originally devised and the availability of new data sources. A best estimate of packaging waste generated in Ireland was obtained by combining information about packaging waste recovered with an estimation of packaging waste in residual waste that may be either sent for recovery or disposal.

The EPA gathered data on recovery and recycling of packaging waste from multiple sources: waste operators, Repak and self-complying producers of packaging.

## Treatment of Packaging Waste

It is estimated that 870,109 tonnes of packaging waste was generated in Ireland in 2013. Of the total generated, 766,847 tonnes (88%) was recovered (including preparation for reuse, recycling, energy recovery and other recovery) and 610,397 tonnes (70%) was recycled.

Recovery operations include:

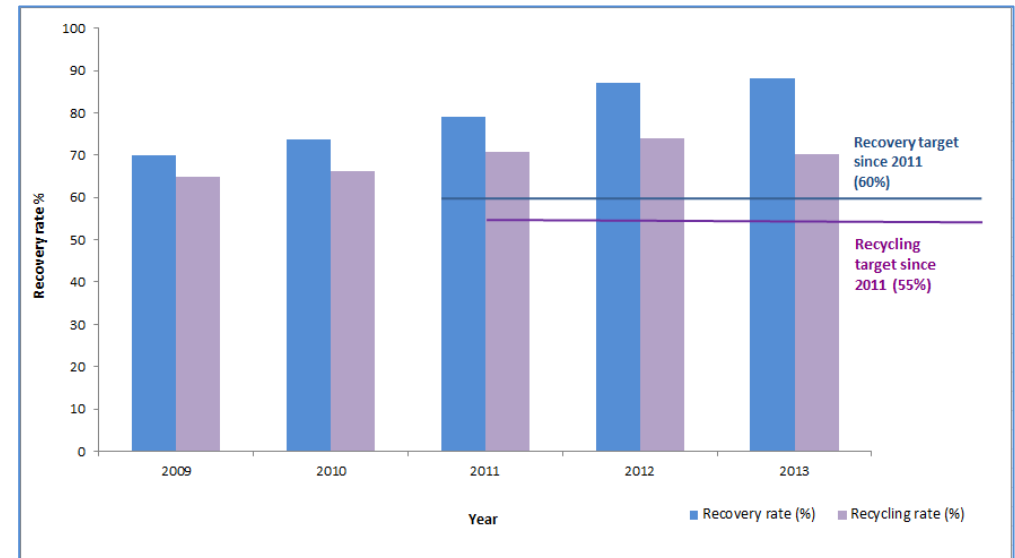
- Preparation for reuse e.g. repair of wooden pallets.
- Recycling - reprocessing into products, materials or substances whether for the original or other purposes, e.g. reprocessing of glass or metal packaging back into products.
- Energy recovery e.g. incineration of residual waste containing waste packaging at plants with energy recovery, co-incineration of solid recovered fuel at cement kilns.
- Other recovery such as use of biostabilised residual waste as landfill cover.

The majority by weight of packaging waste was recycled (70%). There has been a significant shift towards energy recovery rather than disposal of residual waste streams, particularly since 2011, so the recovery rate has increased over this time.

## Targets

Each Member State is obliged to meet targets for the recovery of waste packaging and recycling of waste packaging. There are also targets for recycling of particular waste packaging materials (glass, plastic, paper & board, metals and wood). Figure 1 shows that Ireland has met the overall % packaging waste recovery rate and % recycling rate targets since they came into force.

Figure 1. Overall recovery rate (%) and recycling rate (%) for packaging waste, 2009 to 2013



<sup>1</sup> The deadline for reporting 2014 data to the Commission is 30 June 2016.

Table 1 provides information on Ireland's performance against the EU Directive targets for packaging waste material recycling rates.

**Table 1. Packaging waste material recycling and recovery rates compared to EU targets, 2013**

Material	EU recycling rate target (Packaging Directive 94/62/EC as amended)	Ireland's recycling rate, 2013
Glass	60% by weight	80%
Plastic	22.5% by weight, counting exclusively material that is recycled back into plastics	40%
Paper & Board	60% by weight	79%
Metals	50% by weight	79%
Wood	15% by weight	82%

## Legislation

The Packaging Directive (94/62/EC) aims to prevent the generation of packaging and sets targets for the recovery of packaging waste. The Directive was transposed into national law (Statutory Instrument No. 282 of 2014).

Under the Circular Economy Package, the Commission has proposed new targets for preparing for reuse and recycling for all packaging waste (65% by 2025 and 70% by 2030) and targets for individual materials (plastic, wood, ferrous metal, aluminium, glass, paper & cardboard). The legislative proposals under the Circular Economy Package are currently under negotiation with Member States.

## Producer Responsibility Initiative

The Packaging Directive is a Producer Responsibility Initiative (PRI) Directive, where the packaging producers (persons who, for the purpose of trade or otherwise in the course of business, sells or otherwise supplies to other persons packaging material, packaging or packaged products) have responsibility for the environmentally sound management of packaging at their end of life.

Between 2012 and 2014, the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government reviewed the PRIs operating in Ireland. The Packaging PRI model was found to be operating effectively, enabling Ireland to meet the Packaging Directive targets. Repak is the compliance scheme for packaging ([www.repak.ie](http://www.repak.ie)).

**Figure 2. Baled waste plastic packaging**



## More information

An Excel file with 2013 data and table and figure in this data release is available to download from <http://www.epa.ie/pubs/reports/waste/stats>.

For more information on EU statistics on packaging and waste packaging, see [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Packaging\\_waste\\_statistics](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Packaging_waste_statistics).