WASTE PACKAGING STATISTICS FOR IRELAND

EPA Waste Data Release, 16 July 2019 (updated 13-09-2019)
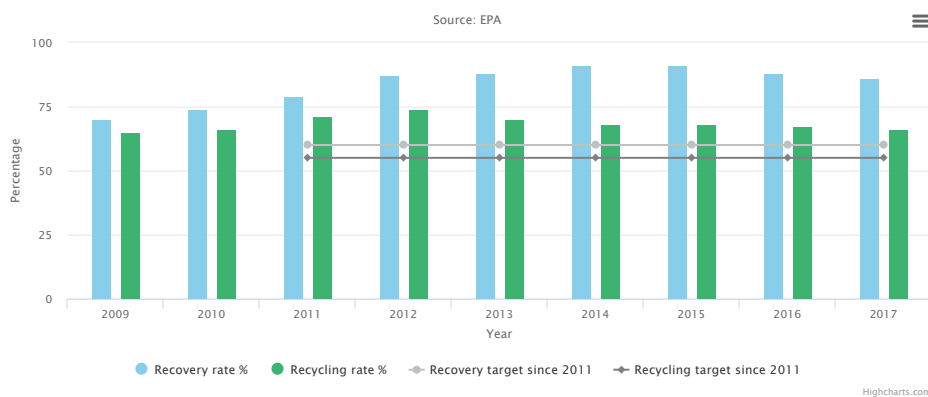
Reference Year 2017 *(Draft data: subject to validation by Eurostat)*

Packaging is used to contain and protect foods and goods as they are transported and presented on shop shelves. The EU Packaging and Waste Packaging Directive promotes the recycling and recovery of packaging waste to reduce its environmental impact and encourage resource efficiency. Each Member State is obliged to meet targets for recovery of waste packaging and recycling for glass, plastic, paper & board, metals and wood packaging.

Ireland met all EU targets for recycling and recovery of packaging waste in 2017. Our recycling rate is 66% and our recovery rate is 86%.

2017 is the first year that Ireland generated over 1 million tonnes of packaging waste.

Percentage recovery and recycling, 2009 to 2017

Source: EPA

● Recovery rate %　　● Recycling rate %　　—◆— Recovery target since 2011　　—◆— Recycling target since 2011

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KEY TRENDS

Most of Ireland's packaging waste was recycled.

Ireland's packaging waste recycling rate is 66%. Recycling is good for the environment because there is a wealth of resources and energy used to produce the various packaging material streams. For example, products made from recycled aluminium, use 95% less energy than those made using virgin material. The Circular Economy packaging waste recycling target of 70% by 2030 will mean that more resources are diverted to recycling.

Total recovery of packaging waste was 86%

This means that in addition to the 681,164 tonnes of packaging waste that was recycled, 210,023 tonnes of packaging waste were sent for recovery at either waste recovery facilities or cement kilns that incinerate packaging material to generate energy. Energy recovery avoids the emissions associated with disposal of packaging waste at landfill. In the case of cement kilns, energy recovery avoids burning of fossil fuels by substituting packaging waste materials as a fuel source.

Ireland produced over 1 million tonnes of packaging waste in 2017.

Prevention and preparation for reuse of waste will continue to be preferred to recycling and energy recovery because of the emissions associated with the resources used to produce packaging, and because the waste industry that collects, transports and processes packaging waste is powered by fossil fuels.

Show Table 1 Waste packaging generation and treatment, 2017

| Material | | Packaging waste generated | Recovered or incinerated at waste incineration plants with energy recovery by: | | | | | | Recycling rate % | Rate of recovery or incineration at waste incineration plants with energy recovery % |
			Material recycling	Other forms of recycling	Total recycling	Energy recovery	Other forms of recovery	Incineration at waste incineration plants with energy recovery	Total recovery and incineration at waste incineration plants with energy recovery		
	Glass	161,425	135,851		135,851		53		135,904	84%	84%
	Plastic	280,673	85,657	9,232	94,889	37,511	2,038	83,597	218,034	34%	78%
	Paper & board	410,797	318,858	3,660	322,518	22,484	650	26,346	371,999	79%	91%
Metals	Aluminium				0				0		
	Steel				0				0		
	Total	63,382	45,634		45,634		109	7,779	53,523	72%	84%
	Wood	110,713	82,218		82,218	25,534	215	1,131	109,098	74%	99%
	Other (textiles)	11,317	53		53		60	2,515	2,628	0%	23%
	Total	**1,038,308**	**668,272**	**12,892**	**681,164**	**85,529**	**3,126**	**121,368**	**891,186**	**66%**	**86%**

Data table for 2017 reference year as submitted to the European Commission.

Data in tonnes unless otherwise specified.

Open in Excel: EPA_Pack_T1_2017_V3 (XLS 14KB)

Show Table 2 Waste packaging exported for recovery, 2017

Material	Packaging waste sent to other Member States or exported outside the Community for:

		Material recycling	Other forms of recycling	Energy recovery	Other forms of recovery	Incineration at waste incineration plants with energy recovery
	Glass	19,000				
	Plastic	76,000				
	Paper & board	314,000				
Metals	Aluminium					
	Steel					
	Total	40,000				
	Wood	82,000				
	Other	53				
	Total	531,053				58,000

Data table for 2017 reference year as submitted to the European Commission

Data in tonnes

Open in Excel: EPA_Pack_T2_2017_V2 (XLS 11KB)

Show Table 3 Waste packaging recycling, 2017

Material	Packaging Directive recycling target	Recycling rate, 2017
Glass	60% by weight	84%
Plastic	22.5% by weight, counting exclusively material that is recycled back into plastics	34%, counting all material recycling
Paper & board	60% by weight	79%
Metals	50% by weight	72%
Wood	15% by weight	74%

Open in Excel: Table 3 Waste packaging recycling, 2017 (XLS 10KB)