



## Recycled paper symbol usage guidelines for paper and envelopes

You can print the recycled paper symbol directly onto your projects, within the parameters outlined by the Federal Trade Commission in its [Environmental Marketing Guide](#), as a vehicle to promote the environmental qualities of the paper. Only when you use products that are recyclable or made with recycled waste can you use this logo.

### What is the recycled paper symbol?

The universal recycling symbol, often called the "three-chasing-arrows" or "Mobius loop," was first developed and used by recycled paperboard manufacturers, then adopted industry-wide to promote the recycled content of various paper products. The symbol can be used to convey that a paper or envelope is recyclable and/or made from recycled fiber. Unless both messages can be substantiated, the claim should make it clear whether the reference is to the product's recyclability or its recycled content.

### Why use the recycled paper symbol?

When you use the recycled paper symbol, you are indicating to consumers that the paper or envelope you are using was manufactured using recycled fiber — either pre-consumer or post-consumer waste. This is considered less harmful to the environment because less virgin fiber is used; thereby reducing tree harvesting, water usage, energy consumption, emission of greenhouse gases and pollution.

### What is post-consumer vs. pre-consumer waste?

Post-consumer waste is a waste type produced by the end consumer of a material stream; that is, where the waste-producing use did not involve the production of another product. Quite commonly, it is simply the garbage that individuals routinely discard, either in a waste receptacle or a dump, or by littering, incinerating, pouring down the drain, or washing into the gutter.

Post-consumer waste is distinguished from pre-consumer waste, which is the reintroduction of manufacturing scrap (such as trimmings from paper production, defective aluminum cans, etc...) back into the manufacturing process. Pre-consumer waste is commonly used in manufacturing industries, and is often not considered recycling in the traditional sense.

In asserting a recycled content claim, distinctions may be made between pre-consumer and post-consumer materials. Where such distinctions are asserted, any express or implied claim about the specific pre-consumer or post-consumer content of a product or package must be substantiated.

Example: A greeting card is composed 30% by fiber weight of paper collected from consumers after use of a paper product, and 20% by fiber weight of paper that was generated after completion of the paper-making process, diverted from the solid waste stream, and otherwise would not normally have been reused in the original manufacturing process. The marketer of the card may claim either that the product "contains 50% recycled fiber," or may identify the specific pre-consumer and/or post-consumer content by stating, for example, that the product "contains 50% total recycled fiber, including 30% post-consumer."

## How to use the recycled paper symbol:

Unless a product or package is both recycled and recyclable, a claim should make it clear whether the reference is to the product's recyclability or its recycled content. All claims must be truthful and require substantiation.

"Recycled content" claims on labels and in advertising may be made for materials that have been recovered or diverted from the solid waste stream, either during the manufacturing process (pre-consumer) or after consumer use (post-consumer). Claims should specify whether they refer to the product or the product's packaging. If the product or package does not consist of 100 percent recycled content (excluding minor, incidental components), qualifying words — like the percentage of recycled content in the product — must be used to limit the claim. Claims should indicate that the paper fiber is recycled unless the coating is too.

Qualifications or disclosures must be clear, prominent and understandable to prevent deception. The symbol and language should be in close proximity to each other and large enough for consumers to identify and read.

### Our suggested approach is to use the following examples as a guideline:

1. Solid filled logo – use to indicate recycled content (pre-consumer and/or post-consumer)
2. Outline (hollow) logo – use to indicate recyclable product
3. Hybrid (half solid/half outline) logo – use to indicate recyclable product and contains recycled content (pre-consumer and/or post-consumer)
4. White logo on black circle background – use to indicate product is printed on paper or envelope made from 100% recycled content (specify pre and/or post-consumer)

Examples...



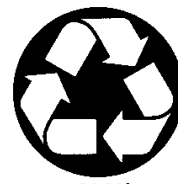
1. Contains 30% Post-Consumer Waste



2. This Product is Recyclable



3. Contains 10% Recycled Content and product is Recyclable  
... (specify pre or post consumer recycled content)...



4. Contains 100% Recycled Content

Avoid the use of the following or similar statements on printed products:

- Earth Friendly
- Environmentally Friendly
- Environmentally Safe
- Green
- Nature's Friend
- Non-polluting
- Ozone Friendly