

# Wisconsin's Newspaper Recycled Content Requirements: 2007 Results

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Wisconsin Legislature enacted the newspaper recycled content law in 1990 as part of the state's efforts to build and sustain demand for recyclable materials. Wisconsin law<sup>1</sup> requires newspaper and shoppers guide publishers and printers to use newsprint such that the average post-consumer recycled content of all newsprint used for the year meets or exceeds a minimum standard. This demand by publishers supports the paper mills' demand for the old newspapers and magazines collected from Wisconsin's municipal recycling programs.

The minimum standard for recycled fiber increased from 10 percent in 1992 to 33 percent in 1998 through 2000. For 2001 and 2002 the minimum standard was 37 percent. In 2003, the Legislature reduced the standard to 33 percent and it remains at that level indefinitely.

Printers and publishers are required to report to the Department of Natural Resources by March 31 of each year on their use of post-consumer recycled newsprint. Publishers that do not meet the recycled content requirement are assessed a fee. Section NR 546.08, Wis. Adm. Code, describes the procedure by which a printer or publisher may request a waiver from the fee. Because out-of-state publishers are exempted from reporting, those that report voluntarily are not assessed a fee for not meeting the recycled content requirement (s. NR 546.05 (4)). In 2007, four central publishers and one individual publisher fell into this category of out-of-state publishers.

## THE 2007 REPORTING CYCLE

On average, newsprint used by Wisconsin printers and publishers contained 45.6 percent post-consumer fiber, exceeding the state standard. Fifty-four central printers and individual publishers reported using 120,869 tons of newsprint; of that total, 57,468 tons (47.5%) were post-consumer recycled fiber. Six of the 11 publishers that did not meet the minimum standard paid the required fee; the five that did not pay were out-of-state publishers exempted by rule from reporting requirements and therefore from minimum content requirements.

Recycled Content Newsprint Reported in 2007	Central Printers	Individual Publishers	Totals
Number reporting	44	10	54
Tons of newsprint purchased	75,215	45,654	120,869
Tons of post-consumer recycled fiber	36,660	20,808	57,468
Average post-consumer recycled content	45.37%	46.49%	45.6%
Highest post-consumer recycled content	100.0%	100.0%	-
Lowest post-consumer recycled content	24.18%	29.83%	-
Number not meeting requirement	10	1	11

## ANNUAL COMPARISONS

The use of recycled newsprint (as a percent of total fiber in newsprint) fluctuates annually, but has been above 40 percent since 1998. The only year that the statewide average recycled content used by Wisconsin publishers and printers did not meet the minimum recycled content standard was 1996.

<sup>1</sup> See s. 287.31, Wis. Stats., and NR 546, Wis. Adm. Code for details about state requirements.

## ANNUAL COMPARISONS (1992-2007)

Year	Mandated post-consumer recycled content	Average post-consumer recycled content	Tons of newsprint purchased	Tons post-consumer recycled fiber	Highest post-consumer recycled content	Lowest post-consumer recycled content	Number not meeting requirement
1992	10%	23.4%	167,000	39,131	100%	0%	2
1993	10%	28.9%	179,985	52,096	100%	10.0%	0
1994	25%	31.0%	179,373	55,583	100%	13.0%	14
1995	25%	27.3%	189,729	51,852	91%	0%	26
1996	35%	32.9%	180,237	59,327	90%	12.0%	28
1997	35%	37.6%	184,634	69,389	100%	16.0%	14
1998	33%	41.9%	192,316	79,779	100%	17.0%	9
1999	33%	42.8%	192,572	82,110	100%	18.4%	10
2000	33%	45.5%	186,698	78,313	100%	25.3%	5
2001	37%	42.9%	199,364	71,913	100%	44.4%	13
2002	37%	41.8%	164,627	68,744	100%	15.7%	10
2003	33%	47.0%	178,442	83,783	100%	26.5%	2
2004	33%	41.3%	164,774	68,070	98.3%	21.4%	10
2005	33%	42.8%	156,578	67,073	96.0%	21.4%	8
2006	33%	45.1%	132,753	59,905	100%	18.0%	8
2007	33%	46.5%	120,869	57,468	100%	24.2%	11

Contact (608) 266-2111 or [DNRWasteMaterials@wisconsin.gov](mailto:DNRWasteMaterials@wisconsin.gov) for further information.

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