

Beermats and The Environment

Environmental issues have come to the forefront in printing over recent years, with paper and board constantly in the spotlight. As with any other industry we rely on the suppliers of our raw materials to ensure that each stage within their sphere of influence has been closely scrutinised in terms of their compliance to EU and World Environmental Regulations.

When asking what impact our product has on our environment there are three main elements to consider in the manufacture of beermats (aka: dripmats or pulp-board coasters).

1) Pre-Press

By pre-press we include all the processes that go into producing the artwork or designs for the final print. Through the use of e-mail facilities, ISDN and the internet it is now possible to transfer graphic files electronically. As a result, on a typical job, it is now quite conceivable to negate the use of any external media such as CD's and the consequent postage and packing.

On receipt of this intellectual property we go to what is called 'plate stage'. Since July 2003 we have opted for CTP (Computer To Plate) technology. This has significantly impacted on minimizing waste. The previously used conventional plates involved the production of film, analogue proofing and then plate processing, each requiring their own chemical processes. CTP or digital plates are made from 100% aluminium and any damaged or scrap items are sent for recycling to a scrap merchant. Only two chemicals are used, one being developer which is collected and disposed of by a specialist company (S.I.P.S) as it is a mild corrosive. The other chemical is Gum Arabic which is water soluble and harmless.

2) Board

Beerboard is produced from wood-pulp. The pulp is constructed from a mix of already recycled paper pulp (about 85%) and Scandinavian indigenous softwood. The softwood is purchased from forests that adhere to the 'sustainable forestry program' where more trees are planted than are felled. This pulp is light brown in colour and unsuitable for printing purposes so a final sheet of chlorine-free bleached paper tops the bulk.

3) Print and Produce

Wherever possible we use a range of process inks containing renewable source resins and vegetable oils. These inks are described as 'Bio, Vegi or Eco' Process Inks. The inks contain various vegetable oils such as soya and linseed oils to give the required properties. These inks are entirely vegetable oil based and contain no mineral oil diluents derived from petroleum.

Our make-ready sheets and waste skeletons post-cut are collected and recycled in a normal paper recycling plant. All our beermats are packed with polyethylene film which is easy to recycle and burns without any residues. Pallets are constantly re-used through our carriage providers.

Once in the market we have no control over the final destination of the mats. We trust that like any other newspaper, magazine or paper product the user disposes of the beerboard in the normal paper recycling bins provided by local councils.