

Environmental impact of paper production

[Environment](#), [Global Warming](#)



The technology of paper production today is promising a safer, healthier environment tomorrow. That is to say that the many technological advancements in the paper industry have reduced the amount of dangerous chemicals produced drastically. In exchange for the tireless efforts of citizens around the world reducing and recycling, the paper industry has reduced its dioxin output and nearly eradicated the use of chlorine based bleaching. Despite the numerous technologically operated pieces of the paper production puzzle, plants continue to provide work for people whether it be transporting paper, operating machinery, repairing and maintaining equipment, or developing even cleaner ways to make paper. Especially paper production plants like the one local to West Linn, being the commercial producer that they are they mostly produce things like posterboard, and high grade paper that keeps the economy flowing smoothly. If our plant were to discontinue operation, that would be quite a snag. Paper prices would go up because of the need to bring in more paper from farther away, having been so convenient before. Hundreds of people would be out of their job and would either need to commute to a farther away plant which would be bad for the environment because of burning car fuel or find a totally new job. The Dioxins produced by paper production climb all the way up the food chain into humans, they are around us all the time. They are in our food and in the air, and can cause cancer in small doses. That is why it's so important that scientists continue to develop alternatives to chlorine bleaching because that is the main reason dioxins are created, aside from the dioxins produced burning fossil fuels. Another piece of the puzzle as mentioned by Penny Machinski in my previous paper is

the massive amount of electricity that is used in paper production. Michael Oppenheimer, a professor of geosciences at Princeton told Time Magazine that electric power production accounts for about 40 percent of emissions in the U. S. This is why it is important that people continue to conserve energy at plants, every little thing helps, even changing lightbulbs to fluorescent as Machinski mentioned can help a great deal in the long run. And that's what it's all about after all is the long run, not digging a grave of emissions so deep that the world can't recover. Finally, carbon dioxide emissions by paper manufacturers. Not only do paper companies tear down the trees that produce oxygen from CO₂ but they are also the fourth highest carbon dioxide producers among all types of manufacturers. The leaders being chemical, petroleum and coal products, and primary metal industries. Locally we are lucky that the plant can be located right on the river because the already not very clean water is treated once before its use in the paper, and once again after so the water leaves the plant cleaner than it entered. Needless to say paper production has been a significant factor in impacting the environment up until recently, but has been improved, though not completely gone just yet.