

which is easy to reduce by burning, breaking, compaction, or degradation. More specific aspects of the relationship between packaging and solid waste disposal are these:

The sheer quantity of packaging wastes imposes a general load on the disposal facilities of the Nation. That is one aspect.

Collection of packaging materials is extremely costly if containers are thrown away carelessly, easy if they are discarded in waste cans.

Processing of packaging wastes may be easy or difficult depending on whether they are simply dumped or whether they are incinerated or landfilled. And different materials cause different degrees of difficulty.

Finally, reuse and recycling of packaging wastes presents yet another aspect, distinct from collection or disposal.

THE QUANTITATIVE ASPECT

First, let's look at the quantitative aspects of packaging. Forty-six million tons of packaging materials were produced and sold in the United States in 1966 (enclosure 1).

PACKING MATERIALS CONSUMPTION, 1966 AND 1976

[In millions of tons]

Material	1966		1976	
	Tonnage	Percent of total	Tonnage	Percent of total
Paper and paperboard.....	25.2	55	36.9	57
Glass.....	8.2	18	11.9	19
Metals.....	7.1	16	8.4	13
Wood.....	4.1	9	4.4	7
Plastics.....	1.0	2	2.5	4
Total.....	45.6	100	64.1	100

Source: Midwest Research Institute.

This massive tonnage—made up of many billions of individual units, most of them weighing much less than a pound each—represented about 12 percent of the 350 million tons of residential, commercial, and portions of industrial rubbish generated. This excludes agricultural manure, 1.3 billion tons yearly; mining wastes, 1 billion tons; scrapped automobiles, 6 million units or about 15 million tons, and building rubble, for which we have no estimate. The total comes to about 10 pounds per person per day, a figure roughly double the one you may have heard because it includes commercial rubbish and some industrial rubbish, not residential waste alone. Of this, packaging materials accounted for slightly over 1 pound per person per day.

Packaging materials tonnage will have grown to 64 million by 1976—up 18 million tons. This increase cannot be attributed to population growth alone. Americans will be using much more packaging in 1976 than 10 years earlier—122 pounds more, to be exact, for every man, woman, and child. Per capita package consumption will jump from 466 pounds to 588 pounds in the 10-year period.

Many factors underlie this dramatic increase, but chief among them is the continuing rise of self-service merchandising, which creates