ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT COMPARISON TOOL

A tool for understanding environmental decisions related to the pulp and paper industry

EFFECTS OF DECREASED GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ON WATER USE

Emissions from End-of-Life of Forest Products

The vast majority of emissions associated with the end-of-life of wood, paper and paperboard products consists of methane released from landfills as the result of the decomposition of these products in landfills. These emissions are very product-specific; some products (e.g., uncoated copy paper) release large amounts of methane and others (e.g., newsprint, wood) release relatively little. Keeping products out of landfills is especially important for those grades which release larger quantities of methane. The effects on water use of recovering rather than landfilling used paper depend on the alternative use to which the use paper is put, but in most cases, the effect is small compared to the water use at the manufacturing facilities.

For all grades, an important option for reducing greenhouse gas emissions is improved capture and destruction of methane before it escapes from landfills to the atmosphere. Improved methane capture and destruction has very little impact on life cycle water use.