

# Corrugated Paper Pallets



## Corrugated Paper Pallets: An Alternative?

Recently, a number of companies have experimented with using corrugated paper pallets in place of timber:

Manufacturers of these products often suggest to industry that pallets made from corrugated materials equal to, or better than, pallets made from timber.

### The Similarity: Sustainably Sourced

There are certainly similarities. Corrugated paper is usually sourced from certified forests where material taken out is replaced with new trees. Timber for European pallets and packaging comes from these environmentally sustainable sources.

However, it's here that the comparative benefits of paper and timber pallets begin to diverge:



### The Difference - 1: The Impact of Production

Manufacturing a product requires energy, which in turn has implications for the environment. The processed layers that are used to make a rigid paper pallet require a large amount of energy. The wood must be harvested; then cut; chipped; turned into pulp using large quantities of water; dried; and shaped it. Compare this to timber, which is simply cut to size after harvesting, and so has a significantly lower carbon footprint than paper. In addition, the manufacturing process for timber pallets and packaging uses far less gas and water:



### The Difference – 2: Recyclable?

Being made from wood pulp, corrugated paper pallets can be recycled. However, as in the production process, recycling paper requires a series of pulping and drying stages. This in turn requires significantly more energy than recycling a wooden product.

### The Difference – 3: Reuse-able?

With a longer lifespan, higher durability and more efficient and established recovery structure, than a paper equivalent, a timber pallet is far more likely to be reused - one of the reasons pallet pooling systems are popular around the world.

### The Difference – 4: What's the Damage?

Corrugated paper pallets can become damaged easily, particularly punctured by sharp objects. They can also take in water, compromising their strength, making them unsuitable for use in damp environments.

### Timber Pallets: A World of Difference

Suppliers of paper alternatives like to compare themselves with timber pallets. The reality is that, while the basic source of both materials may be the same, when it comes to the impact of the manufacturing process, operational strength, recoverability and environmental credentials, timber pallets have by far the greatest benefits to their users.