Sealed Air Corporation

TEN OLD SHERMAN TURNPIKE / DANBURY, CT 06810 (203)791-3500/FAX (203)791-3618

The material produced by Instapak® foam-in-place packaging systems is polyurethane foam. It is produced without the use of CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons) or HCFCs (hydrochlorofluorocarbons), chemicals which are linked to the depletion of the ozone layer. Polyurethanes are inert plastics found in many aspects of our daily lives, such as bedding, chair cushions, carpet padding and automobiles.

Unlike most packaging products, Instapak® foam is produced on site by our customers, just when it is needed. To do this, two liquid components, Instapak® component "A" and Instapak® component "B" are mixed and dispensed through specialized equipment. As the two components react with one another, they expand and surround the item being packaged, forming a custom-fit, protective cushion. This process and the foam's high-performance characteristics mean that less foam may be used when packaging a product without sacrificing product protection.

While Instapak® foam provides the groundwork for "doing more with less", we realize that there may be examples of excessive packaging. Most packaging is designed to protect the product it contains. Proper protection can eliminate damage, prevent the product itself from becoming waste, and eliminate the need for more packaging associated with the product return and replacement process. In this light, Sealed Air believes that Instapak® foam is environmentally sensible packaging for the following highlighted reasons:

Source Reduction/Waste Minimization

Reduction of waste at the source is listed as the first of the three R's because it is considered to be the single most important aspect of managing our waste and protecting our environment. One of the most important attributes of Instapak® foam is that it provides maximum product protection with a minimum amount of material. Over 50 packaging engineers in more than 30 worldwide packaging laboratories work with our customers to design packaging that uses the least amount of packaging material without sacrificing product protection. Millions of pounds of packaging material have been eliminated from the waste stream due to the efforts of this team.

Instapak® foam also helps to reduce the amount of energy required to transport products from one place to another. Products can be shipped in smaller, lighter boxes. Instapak® foam significantly reduces or eliminates damage. This high level of product protection eliminates the need for products to be returned for replacement. Entire shipping cycles are eliminated. Such efforts are often overlooked. Instapak® foam customers may be unaware of these important source reduction and waste minimization benefits.

Reuse

If the opportunity arises, Instapak® foam cushions can be reused for multiple shipments of the same product. Because the foam literally takes the shape of the product, repackaging is simple, ensuring proper product placement, and minimizing damage on return. Foam may be reused as carton filler in cases where multiple shipments are not required.

Recycle

Recycling is categorized as the last of the three R's while, at the same time, it often receives the most attention. In the search for more environmentally sensible packaging, companies often set goals to use packaging materials that can be recycled. We have an Instapak® foam return program available to help companies meet those goals. As a first step in building a recycling infrastructure for Instapak® foam, Sealed Air began accepting it back at seven of our facilities in the US in 1992. The program was so popular that we expanded it to what it is today. Instapak® foam may be returned to any one of more than

twenty-five worldwide locations. As long as it is clean and dry, no returned material will be sent to a landfill.

Disposal Options

As much as we would all like for the three R's to take care of all of our disposal needs, some packaging materials may end up in a land fill. We believe that environmentally sensible packaging must be compatible with the actual means of disposal. In certain areas of the country, municipal solid waste is managed by waste-to-energy combustion. Instapak® foam is completely compatible with these facilities. Instapak® foam has a high energy content similar to that of coal. Instapak® foam can actually be used to aid in the processing of other less combustible materials. The process leaves less than one percent ash and is completely free of any heavy metals.

If Instapak® foam has to be buried in a landfill, it can be compacted down to 10% of its original volume and, therefore, take up very little space. As a biostable material, the foam will not degrade or leach into the soil or groundwater systems. It is interesting to note that, even if Instapak® foam was a biodegradable product, most modern landfills are constructed and managed to minimize exposure of waste to air, water, and sunlight. Without exposure to these elements, scientists have found that even after 40-50 years, food wastes and paper hardly decompose at all.

Additional Information

Sealed Air prints an environmental message with important telephone numbers (toll-free in the US and Canada) on our Instamate® film. Callers to those numbers are given environmental information about Instapak® foam including the option to return the foam cushions to one of our more than twenty-five worldwide return sites.

We strive to keep our customers informed about the environmental aspects surrounding Instapak® foam-in-place packaging materials and strongly support open communications regarding your environmental concerns. Further information regarding our company and our environmental profile may be found on our web site at http://www.instapak.com.

Sincerely,

Matt Thompson
Marketing Manager, Environmental Issues
Engineered Products Division
matt.thompson@sealedair.com