



Composed entirely of easily recycled, compostable materials, the REELEX box is one of the most environmentally-friendly packaging options available to the structured cabling industry.

### An Environmentally Responsible Approach to Cable Packaging

One of the most overlooked aspects of wire, cable, conduit and tubing installations is the impact of packaging. While programs such as RoHS, LEED and REACH have considered the use of environmentally-hazardous materials in the product itself, the packaging used to transport and dispense these products has received little attention in terms of material composition, disposal, recyclability or reusability.

As the most commonly-used package for "last mile" lengths of structured cabling, REELEX is undergoing a "Green" initiative to further improve and understand the impact of linear product packaging on the environment. By taking a cradle-to-cradle perspective on wire and cable packaging, REELEX offers environmentally responsible packaging options for environmentally responsible companies.



#### A focus on reusable natural materials

Because REELEX packages are considered disposable packaging (they are disposed of or recycled when empty), it is especially important to consider the best material choices so that any empty REELEX package can easily enter the recycling stream or have minimal environmental impact if disposed of.

The REELEX box has always been an comparatively eco-friendly package, as over 80% percent of a REELEX package is compostable, recyclable, and can be manufactured from post-consumer materials. However, while the majority of the package is manufactured from eco-friendly materials, the other 20% of the package is represented by a payout tube made from injection-molded HDPE. This plastic is indeed recyclable, but not compostable, and has never been easily manufactured from reclaimed material.

To further reduce the impact of cable packaging on the environment, REELEX is introducing payout tube replacements manufactured from the same material as the rest of the box - paper fiber. Beginning with a new REELEX II® tube design, the new RF60 fiber tube brings eco-friendly disposable packaging to structured cabling products like Category 6, Coaxial Cables and Fiber Optics.

In 3Q 2010, REELEX will introduce EcoCore: a direct tube alternative for both REELEX "I" (small-tube) packaging as well as REELEX II (big-tube) packages. EcoCore brings together the best attributes of REELEX "I" and REELEX II®, while offering unique features, cost advantages, a slimmer profile and a focus on sustainability.

As opposed to spools and reels that utilize multiple (and often environmentally-hazardous) material types, these new tubes allow the entire empty package to be manufactured from a single material that is compostable, renewable, recyclable and can utilize post-consumer sources - thus offering a true sustainable packaging system.



RF60  
REELEX II\* Fiber Tube  
(Now Available)



EcoCore®  
REELEX Tube System  
(3Q 2010)

## The decision to move REELEX tubes and packaging towards paper and away from plastic stems from several factors:

1. First, as a material, paper is one of the most regularly-recycled materials available. In 2008, 57.4 percent of the paper consumed in the U.S. was recovered for recycling.\* This compares to just 28% of HDPE plastics (like those used in REELEX tubes and plastic spools).\*\* Paper recycling is one of the most successful and well established recycling programs currently in use. While plastic is also recycled, the huge variations in plastic types and chemicals used make efficient recycling difficult. This is especially true of newer biodegradable plastics, which often cannot be recycled in the same streams as other plastics.
2. When not recycled, paper is biodegradable and compostable. Because paper starts with an organic material (natural cellulose fibers), it will break back down into organic material. Plastic, being derived from petroleum products, is composed of various petrochemicals, many of which are toxic.
3. Advances in the molded pulp packaging industry mean new thermoforming processes produce parts that are comparable in strength and dimensional precision to injection molded plastic. Furthermore, because wood pulp is an easily obtained raw material that can come from several sources, pricing does not fluctuate with oil as does plastic. The result is a cost-effective, durable package that is compostable, biodegradable, recyclable, and made using natural, renewable resources.

\* [http://www.paperrecycles.org/paper\\_environment/index.html](http://www.paperrecycles.org/paper_environment/index.html)

\*\* <http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/facts-text.htm#chart4>

## Reducing Waste Volume

When comparing packaging options, REELEX is superior to reels and spools in terms of packaging waste measured in either cubic volume or by weight. This low waste characteristic is primarily due to REELEX coils requiring no internal structure to dispense. As a result, the REELEX coil only requires a simple outside container that can be manufactured using a wide variety of package materials and shapes.

### The cardboard box



Unlike reels or reel-in-a-box, which are difficult to flatten or disassemble, installers prefer REELEX corrugated boxes because the box can be easily broken down or shredded. Empty REELEX boxes take up less volume than comparable packaging, and are thus easier and less expensive to dispose of or recycle.

### Reusable packaging



The Reuser Case is a durable, weatherproof, cost-effective system designed to be reused indefinitely. The Reuser Case system reduces on-site waste dramatically, as the per-coil materials consist of simple bands, straps or stretch wrap.

### Wrapped coils



Because REELEX coils do not require rotation, packaging waste can be reduced to a bare minimum by simply stretch or shrink wrapping the coil. While the wrapped coil package does not utilize compostable or renewable materials, it does reduce the volume of packaging waste to insignificant levels.

## Material Use & Environmental Impact

