

## Paper and Paper Products

Every production superintendent in the paper industry is, by experience, familiar with the excessive scrap losses and customer complaints that can result from the following wintertime headaches:

1. Curling of stock.
2. Cracking or breaking at creases of folding boxes, cartons, corrugated and solid fiber containers.
3. Loss of package and container strength.
4. Production delays when sheets fail to go through machines smoothly due to static electricity.
5. Gluing failures.

All of the above wintertime problems have a common cause—dry or curling paper caused by low indoor relative humidities.

Whenever you heat air, without adding moisture, its RH drops. Table 10-1 shows that 0°F outside air at 75% RH will have a relative humidity of only 4.4% when heated to 70°F indoors. Even though the theoretical RH should be 4.4% in your plant, the actual observed humidity will be much higher because of the moisture given off by the paper. This type of humidification is very expensive in terms of stock and production.



**Figure 10-1.**

Effects of moisture content in folding paper. Sheet on left has proper moisture. Sheet on right lacks enough moisture—is dry and brittle—breaks on fold.

The RH of surrounding air governs the moisture content of paper, as shown in Table 11-1. The fibrils in paper take on moisture when the paper is drier than the surrounding air and give up moisture when the conditions are reversed.

A paper moisture content range of 5%-7% is essential to maintain satisfactory strength and workability of paper. This requires an indoor RH of about 40%-50%, depending upon the composition of the paper.

Moisture contents of different types of papers will vary slightly from those shown in the table but will follow an identical pattern.

Changes in moisture content thus cause paper to become thicker or thinner, flatter or curlier, harder or softer, larger or smaller, limp or brittle.

**Table 10-1. How Indoor Heating Reduces Indoor RH and Dries Out Paper**

Outdoor Temperature Degrees	Indoor Temperature 70°F	
	Indoor Relative Humidity %	Approx. Moisture Content of Paper
-20	1.5	0.5
-10	2.5	0.8
0	4.4	1.2
10	7.2	2.2
20	11.6	3.3
30	18.1	4.3
40	26.8	5.3
50	38.3	6.4
60	54.0	8.0
70	75.0	11.6

Effect of Indoor Heating Upon RH and Moisture Content of Kraft Wrapping Paper. NOTE: This table assumes an outdoor relative humidity of 75%. When outdoor RH is less, as is common, indoor RH will also be less. Indoor temperatures higher than 70° F will also cause lower relative humidities.

## Printing

The dry air problems found in paper manufacturing are equally common to the printing industry.



Paper curling, generally caused by the expansion and contraction of an unprotected sheet of paper, takes place when too dry an atmosphere draws moisture from the exposed surface which shrinks and curls. The curl will be with the grain of the sheet. This trouble is most pronounced with very lightweight stocks or with cover stocks and coated-one-side papers.

## Wood Products, Woodworking, and Furniture Manufacture

Like all hygroscopic materials, wood takes on or gives off moisture as the RH of the surrounding air varies. When, at any given temperature and relative humidity, the wood finally stops absorbing or liberating moisture, it is said to have reached its equilibrium moisture content (EMC). The moisture in the wood is then "in balance" with the moisture in the air.

It is generally not practical to hold indoor RH as high during the cold months as it is during the warm months. However, when the cold season sets in, humidifiers permit a gradual reduction of RH and EMC to a practical minimum working level. Under this controlled condition, warping and cracking will not occur.

## Leather Processing

RH maintained uniformly in the 40%-60% range (higher in muller rooms) reduces cracking, minimizes loss of pliability, helps maintain quality and appearance, and reduces the dust problem in the plant.

## Offices

RH maintained at 30%-40% stops splitting, checking, shrinkage, and glue joint failure in paneling and furnishings, adds life to carpeting and draperies. Electronic office equipment such as computers, xerographic copiers, and phone systems require a constant RH of 40%-50% to guard against harmful electrical transients (see Page 9).



## Libraries and Museums

Relative humidity maintained uniformly at 40%-55% in storage rooms, vaults, and galleries prolongs the life of valuable collections by stabilizing the pliability of glue, starch and casein. The embrittlement of fibers in paper, canvas, papyrus, leather bindings, etc., is minimized.

**Table 11-1. Moisture Content of Paper at Various Relative Humidities**

Material	Description	Relative Humidity %								
		10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
M.F. Newsprint	Wood Pulp 24% Ash	2.1	3.2	4.0	4.7	5.3	6.1	7.2	8.7	10.6
HMF Writing	Wood Pulp 3% Ash	3.0	4.2	5.2	6.2	7.2	8.3	9.9	11.9	14.2
White Bond	Rag 1% Ash	2.4	3.7	4.7	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.8	10.8	13.2
Com. Ledger	75% Rag 1% Ash	3.2	4.2	5.0	5.6	6.2	6.9	8.1	10.3	13.9
Kraft Wrapping	Coniferous	3.2	4.6	5.7	6.6	7.6	8.9	10.5	12.6	14.9