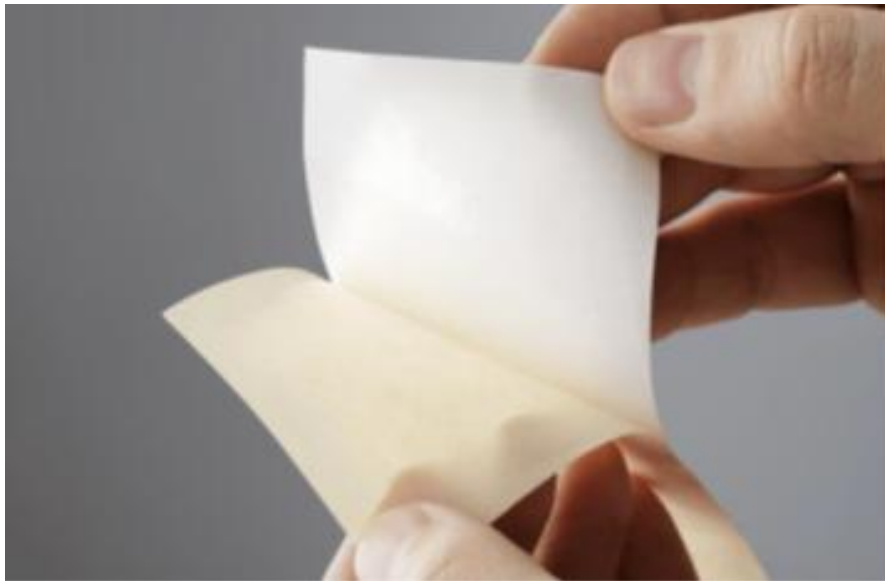


## Recycling Release Liners from Adhesive Tapes

### Sustainable management of adhesive tape release liners

The FAQ offers a clear overview of the current status, existing challenges and possible solutions to enhance the circularity of release liners. It also provides information on collection and recycling partners available in Europe. Use this document to support your sustainable waste management journey and ensure that more of this valuable material is recovered and less gets landfilled or incinerated.



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## Why is release liner recycling important for adhesive tape users and manufacturers?

Release liners make up nearly one-third of a technical tape, yet they become waste immediately after use. Recycling them reduces waste management costs, lowers carbon footprint, and avoids emissions from incineration, delivering both financial and environmental benefits.

## Are release liners from adhesive tapes recyclable?

Yes. Both paper-based and filmic liners are recyclable. Around 80% of tape liners are filmic and 20% are paper. While recycling options exist, efficiency depends on material type, contamination levels, and the ability to separate liners from adhesives and other components.

## What makes recycling paper release liners challenging?

Key barriers include contamination from adhesive residues, fragmented waste volumes across the supply chain, and colour variability (white, yellow, light brown, dark brown), which affects recycling outcomes even though it does not impact tape performance.

## Why does colour variability in paper release liners matter, and what is Afera's position on it?

Paper release liners are available in multiple shades—white, yellow, light brown, and dark brown. While colour does not affect tape performance, it significantly influences recycling outcomes. Darker liners reduce the quality and reuse potential of recycled paper fibres. Afera's 2023 position paper, "[Colour of paper release liner of adhesive tapes: Impact on material circularity](#)", recommends standardising lighter-coloured liners across the industry. This shift improves recyclability, enhances fibre recovery, and supports higher-value circular material loops.

## What steps can companies take to improve the recyclability of their release liner waste?

Companies can separate adhesive waste after converting, standardise lighter-coloured liners to improve circularity, optimise storage to accumulate sufficient volumes, and participate in local or industry-led collection initiatives.

## What recycling technologies are available for release liners today?

Mechanical recycling is well-established for clean, mono-material waste streams. For mixed or contaminated waste, emerging chemical recycling technologies, such as pyrolysis, gasification, and depolymerisation offer future pathways, though they are still developing and dependent on policy clarity.

## Which organisations collect and recycle tape release liners?

Several partners support liner waste collection and recycling across Europe, including Cycle4Green (paper liners), AD Circular (paper and filmic liners), UPM Liner Loop (siliconised papers), Soprema (paper-based liners including dark-coloured grades) and DMP (filmic liners). Each offers varying collection models and geographic coverage. More details in the table below.

Company name	Restrictions on the material to be picked up	Material type accepted	Geographical areas served	Other details	Pre-requisites
<b>AD Circular</b>	In general Labels/tape, wet material, cardboard, contaminants and cores are rejected.	Paper and Filmic	France, Spain, Belgium, Poland, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, and the United Kingdom		No restrictions on RL format, colour, etc.
<b>Cycle4green</b>		Paper	Europe	Collection of liner waste	
<b>UPM Raflatac (RafCycle)</b>		Paper and PP (PP liner is minimal compared to PET liner)	Europe	Individual collection system by UPM	Minimum quantities 5t, in reels without cores (exceptions to be discussed), no contaminants (no residual labels, no matrix)
<b>Soprema</b>	Poly-coated and PET materials	Paper-based liners, including double-sided siliconised and dark-coloured liners	Europe	For PE or PP films, Soprema has other processing capabilities and encourages interested businesses to get in touch.	
<b>DMP</b>	PVC	Difficult plastics including label matrix waste, filmic release liners and composite materials  Mixed polymers with 10-15% paper content	Europe	Cannot separate adhesives or sort by polymer type	Min. quantities ~200 kg for lab tests and up to 10 tonnes for production trials

For more information on release liner recycling visit the [interactive map of CELAB](#).

## How are CELAB and Afera advancing release liner recycling?

[CELAB \(Circular Economy for Labels\)](#) is an industry-wide consortium focused on improving the circularity of label and release liner materials. Their work includes mapping regional recycling capabilities, developing best-practice guidelines for collection and sorting, and coordinating cross-industry efforts to increase the volume and quality of recovered liner waste.

Afera complements this by focusing on adhesive-tape-specific challenges through its Flagship Sustainability Project (AFSP), sharing technical insights, advocating for harmonised approaches, and engaging converters and manufacturers. For more information, visit: <https://afera.com/adhesive-tapes-sustainability/sustainable-management-of-release-liners/>