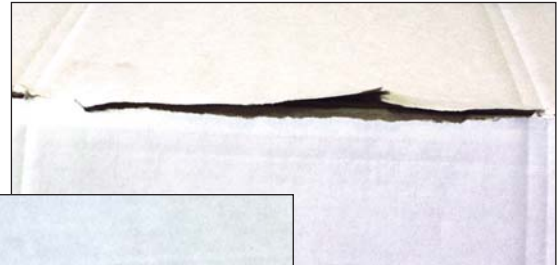


## What is "Dry Board"?

Another winter brings with it the occasional appearance of "dry board" in corrugated materials. Converters in areas where cold and snow are the norm, have used modern methods and technology to help reduce this chronic problem. However, technology has not been able to eliminate it.

In the winter, our skin tends to lose its "supple" characteristics. As we encounter lower relative humidity, chapped lips and dry skin become more prevalent even as we use more lip balm and hand lotion. Corrugated products are very similar - lower temperature and relative humidity affect the performance of corrugated materials in the manufacture and converting of containers, cartons and pads.



Splits in the corrugated material may make the box unusable.

### Causes of "Dry Board"

Moisture is vital to the process of creating the corrugated board, allowing the paper components to wind around the various rollers of the corrugator without cracking or breaking. Corrugated suppliers to Service Container use state-of-the-art technology to monitor and ensure the amount of moisture in the board is consistent regardless of the time of year.

During transit, the corrugated board leaves its controlled environment, and in the winter, that can result in a loss of moisture. In extreme cold, the moisture in the board (and the fibers holding the moisture) can freeze.

### Effects of "Dry Board" in the Converting Process

Since the board is not as "supple" it can be more difficult to process, resulting in slots and cuts that can look slightly frayed. Fortunately, the resulting cartons and containers will perform just fine.

In the more extreme situations, cracks may develop in the scoring areas. This is sometimes only noticeable after beginning to assemble the product. Much like knuckles when your skin is dry, flexing once or twice may be fine, but after that cracks may develop. In the most extreme situations, the cartons will burst at those cracks, making them useless.

### "Dry Board" Prevention

Much like lip balm cannot completely prevent chapped lips, modern methods and technology cannot completely prevent "dry board." To alleviate the problem, corrugators vary the amount of moisture and steam used in the process to make up for lower relative humidity. However, once the board leaves the controlled environment, it is possible that moisture will dissipate, creating an at-risk product.

End-users with a temperature- and humidity-controlled environment can mitigate the effects of winter. Adding a humidifier can help, but it can also be quite costly. The good news is that the occurrence of "dry board" is quite low. For most companies, the easiest course of action is to simply have the product replaced. In fact, changes in weather from one day to another are often enough to produce a more acceptable corrugated product.

### How do I know if I have "dry board"?

Cracks in the corrugated can be an indicator of dry board. But as with any situation where you encounter a quality problem or variation in product performance, contact your supplier immediately to ensure the root cause is properly identified, as well as to ensure prompt replacement.