



**Article Name: Biodegradable Cardstock Pros & Cons**

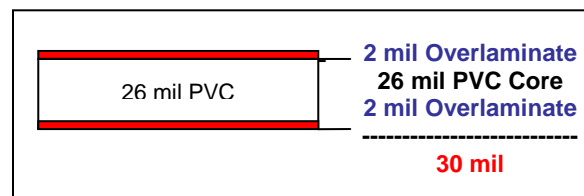
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How environmentally friendly are biodegradable cards (bio-cards)? Biodegradable cardstock has generated a great deal of attention since its inception. ColorID has received a number of inquiries from Card Offices that are investigating the “pros & cons” of environmentally friendly cards. Biodegradable cardstock is a great idea, however; substituting your current ID card for a biodegradable card should come with plenty of questions that need to be considered before purchasing.

Bio-cards are still new for card offices around the world. The bio-card still lacks important pieces of information, which are durability and longevity reports from everyday card users. By working closely with the manufacturers and end-users, ColorID hopes to be able to better assess how these new bio-cards will perform over time. In order for more real world tests to take place, ColorID has enrolled a number of high profile customers in a bio-card test group. Card users have received bio-card samples and will provide valuable insight and feedback to ColorID on the cards performance.

One commonly overlooked issue is a cards lamination (not to be confused with ID printer overlamine). The card lamination is the extra layer of protection that is applied on top of the Litho pre-printed & blank card stock (before dye-sublimation printing). You should ask yourself, “Does my bio-card have lamination and if so what type of card laminate is used?” A traditional PVC card receives 2 separate layers of PVC Laminate (each being approximately 2 / 1000 of an inch thick). The majority of biodegradable cards currently available also receive the same 2 layers of laminate. Without laminate a card is rough to the touch, non-glossy and unprotected from the elements. Providers of these cards often do not mention that these laminates may not be biodegradable and slow the biodegradation process. However, a number of providers are starting to offer a biodegradable overlamine option (ask your ColorID rep).



Another important aspect of going “green” with you card stock, is how the card is disposed of. In order for any biodegradable cardstock to properly decompose, fungi or microorganisms must be present. Some landfills meet these requirements whereas others wear an “industrial composting” label. These industrial composting fields must meet particular temperature & humidity conditions in order to break down the molecular structure of cards.

An additional subject we must consider is the environmental impact from manufacturing the materials used in bio-cards. One such example of this can be found when you look into the impact of a bio-card created from an organic crop like corn. Additional land must

be set aside to grow corn for these new applications. Like any agriculture process, there are real environmental costs in growing these crops. Often fertilizers are used to grow corn more effectively which frequently contain significant amounts of nitrogen and creates algae blooms in the local water columns (due to rain water run-off) as well as producing massive amounts of Nitrous Oxide (which is considered to be significantly worse than carbon dioxide).

Bio-cards currently have a lot of potential in replacing some of our day to day plastic cards. At the same time we have to make sure that we are not simply buying into the marketing hype that can surround the new "green" solution. We need to ask the hard questions relating to how these cards are made and to do our best to determine if the net impact of going with bio-cards is positive or negative to the environment. As of today, it is clear that biodegradable cards are well suited for short term card applications. These short term applications may include: summer orientations, guest cards, conferences, phone cards and even gift cards. There is not enough data to tell us if the new bio-cards have the same durability as traditional plastic cards. If bio-cards have a shorter life and thus need to be reissued more frequently, the positives of having a bio-card may quickly diminish.

ColorID is dedicated to collecting data from customers as well as helping end-users consider the trade-offs of going with a bio-card. If you'd like to learn more about bio-cards, feel free to contact us today toll free 888-682-6567 or [www.ColorID.com](http://www.ColorID.com).



**Introducing the card that is Biodegradable and Earth friendly.**