Center for Packaging and Unit Load Design (CPULD)

News for IKEA Suppliers

Introduction to and History of CPULD's IKEA-Certified Corrugated Lab!

When IKEA began looking for a new laboratory to serve its North American supplier base, the Center for Packaging and Unit Load Design (CPULD) was brought to their attention by an employee who'd graduated from the program here at Virginia Tech. IKEA wanted to reduce the lead time and cost of compliance for its corrugated suppliers, so our former student put IKEA in touch with CPULD. Because of Virginia Tech's history in distribution packaging research, the strength of our current packaging program, and our strong ties to the corrugated industry in the U.S., IKEA decided that CPULD's laboratory would be a great fit!

Eduardo Molina was hired in January 2018 to help facilitate this new certification, and he quickly

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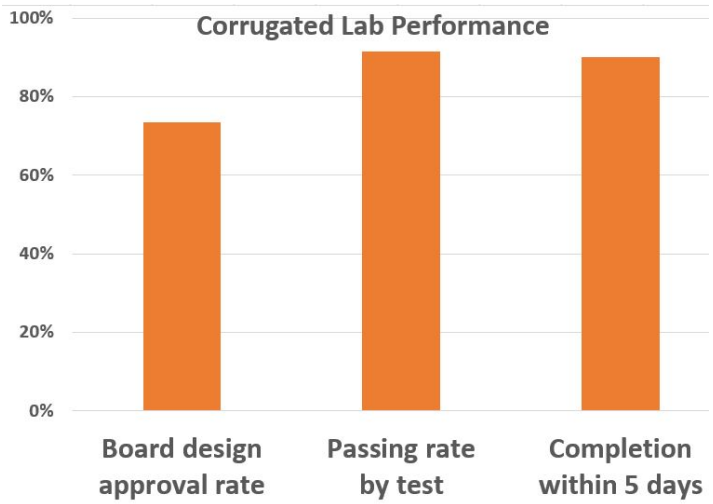

Graph: Shows multiple performance ratings for the Corrugated Lab and will be updated quarterly.

~ Test of the Month: Flat Crush Test ~

Click the video or this link to watch the test being performed!

This test is designed to determine how much load a corrugated board can hold before the structure collapses. It is one of many indicators of the quality of the board and can help predict when crushing is going to occur.

Why you are receiving this newsletter!

You are receiving this newsletter because you are a corrugated supplier for IKEA.

The purpose of this newsletter is to communicate with IKEA suppliers and let you know about what is new in the Virginia Tech packaging program, specifically related to corrugated. We will also share information about the tests we are conducting to certify corrugated boards for IKEA.

This is the introductory newsletter, and we hope to share it with you on a quarterly basis. The following editions will be shorter and include basic summaries of the ongoing activities here at CPULD's Corrugated Lab.

Tactics for Success

In the packaging industry, as in life, communication is key! In order to make sure that your company's samples are received, processed, and tested in a timely fashion, we're taking this opportunity to let you know what we need from you.

1. Please communicate with Eduardo Molina (or another Corrugated Lab specialist) when your company is sending corrugated board samples to our lab. The earlier that you let us know when your samples will arrive at the lab, the earlier your samples will be fit into the lab's testing schedule.

2. Also, we've had issues recently with samples not being packaged properly and arriving damaged. Damaged samples are not able to be tested properly and will have to be replaced, which delays the testing process. Please make sure that your corrugated board samples are packaged in such a way that no dents, dings, or bending can occur to them during transit.

As you can imagine, if samples arrive at the lab with no notice, it could take days to determine their purpose, the tests needed, and to schedule the processing of the samples, which will likely cause multiple-day delays.

Thus, please always let us know the expected arrival of your samples at least 3 days in advance to ensure efficient processing of the project.

We know that, together, we can create a productive, streamlined process to get your samples tested and the final reports back to you quickly, and we appreciate your help in helping us help you!

See the handy graphic below!

Student Spotlight:

Will Greene is a rising senior from Virginia Beach, Virginia. He studies packaging systems and design because he is interested in packaging distribution logistics.

He enjoys working in the Corrugated Lab because he would like to learn more about corrugated board performance. He enjoys the challenge to conduct high quality testing efficiently and being able to operate equipment. He is excited that his role as lab technician involves working with his hands.

His favorite class this year was CAD in Packaging because he could practice software used in industry, such as ArtiosCAD, CAPE, and Adobe Illustrator. When Will is not studying, he participates in the service-based organizations Appalachia Service Project and College Mentors for Kids.

Will's ideal job is one in which he can interact and relate to workers involved in packaging distribution, so that he can learn what improvements must be made to increase safety and efficiency.

1. Properly package and label all samples.

2. Inform lab of arrival date.

3. Send samples.

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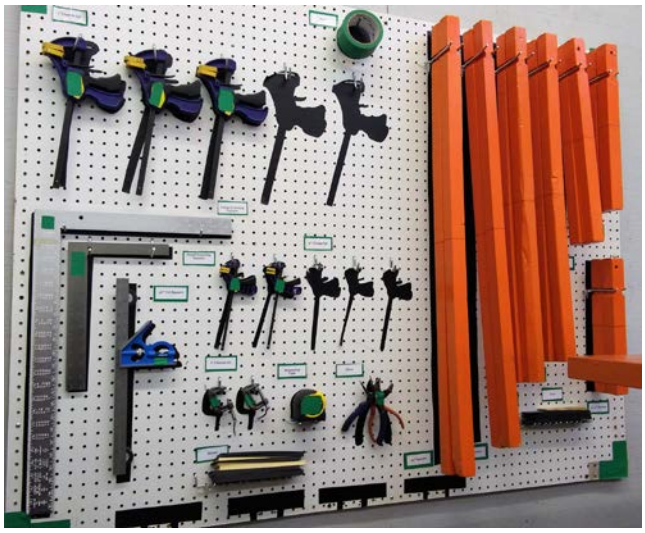
became a great asset in its completion. Everyone involved was excited about the increased industry interest, projects, and funding that would follow.

The International Corrugated Packaging Foundation donated funds to help update the corrugated research lab and equipment. And there were many changes needed to create a commercial-grade testing facility from what had been a research lab.

The lean transformation of the Corrugated Packaging Materials Laboratory was started in the summer of 2018. The lab was repainted to match the new Virginia Tech brand, and an updated system for organization and cleaning was implemented to control the daily workflow, test projects, simplify scheduling, and track progress.



The driving force behind this transformation was the certification of the laboratory as an official IKEA testing laboratory for corrugated packaging materials. In addition, the new organization system allows Virginia Tech students to gain experience in a streamlined industrial-grade facility.

The IKEA certification was finally obtained after a rigorous, two-year long process validating all of our testing procedures and the internal processes of the lab. We hosted IKEA's engineers from China and other locations as they toured and inspected our laboratory's updated equipment and facilities. For the past year, we have been the only testing laboratory in North and South America that is certified to approve corrugated fiberboard producers to sell to IKEA.

Eduardo Molina said that "having a world-class laboratory for testing packaging materials at Virginia Tech allows companies like IKEA to have a reliable partner in their quality systems. At the same time, our students get exposure and experience in material testing, furthering their hands-on learning, a goal of the university"

The Corrugated Packaging Materials Lab now consists of state-of-the-art equipment for use in classes, research, and testing projects. Students are able to gain hands-on experience with corrugated packaging testing and research, and they are able to network with the corrugated industry. Therefore, the IKEA certification furthers the experiential learning opportunities for our department as a whole.

While the lab's focus centers on our students' education, this is a win-win situation. IKEA's corrugated board suppliers get excellent testing services much quicker than they previously experienced and for a competitive cost.

Center for Packaging and Unit Load Design

Corrugated Materials Research and Testing Lab

1650 Research Center Drive (0503)
Blacksburg, VA 24061
Ph: 540-231-7107 | www.unitload.vt.edu

In order to have your corrugated board certified for use by IKEA through CPULD's Corrugated Lab:

1. Look over the IKEA Testing Costs and decide which tests your samples need.
2. Fill out the IKEA Testing Request Form and send to Eduardo Molina.
3. Prepare your samples according to the Testing Request Form guidelines. Being sure to OVERPACKAGE your samples to avoid damage during delivery.
4. Call (540-231-5370) or email (molina@vt.edu) Eduardo Molina to let the Corrugated Lab know when to expect your samples.
5. Send your overpackaged and properly labeled samples to: Corrugated Materials Lab, c/o Eduardo Molina, 1650 Research Center Dr. (0503), Blacksburg, VA 24061.

CPULD hours:

Sunday:	Closed
Monday:	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Tuesday:	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Wednesday:	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday:	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Friday:	8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Saturday:	Closed

Hours for Corrugated Lab deliveries:

Sunday:	Closed
Monday:	8-11:30 a.m. & 1-4:30 p.m.
Tuesday:	8-11:30 a.m. & 1-4:30 p.m.
Wednesday:	8-11:30 a.m. & 1-4:30 p.m.
Thursday:	8-11:30 a.m. & 1-4:30 p.m.
Friday:	8-11:30 a.m. & 1-4:30 p.m.
Saturday:	Closed

Contact Our Team:

Corrugated testing quotes, ongoing corrugated testing operations, Corrugated Lab management.

Eduardo Molina
molina@vt.edu
540-231-5370

Immediate needs, delivery info, invoicing questions, AP / AR.

Angela Riegel
ariegel@vt.edu
540-231-7107

This newsletter is for you, and we would love to hear from our audience! Please send us your questions, comments, and/or any ideas of what you'd like to see as future article topics!

J. Kate Bridgeman:
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