

## N. American PCB Shipments Down 6.7% in September

Written by Chelsey Drysdale

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**BANNOCKBURN, IL** – North American printed circuit board shipments in September were down 6.7%, and orders decreased 3.3% compared to September 2011, says **IPC**

Year to date, PCB shipments were down 4.8%, while orders were down 0.2% compared to the same month last year. Sequentially, PCB shipments increased 9.8%, and orders decreased 0.3%.

The book-to-bill ratio in September fell below parity to 0.97. A ratio of more than 1.0 suggests that current demand is ahead of supply, which is a positive indicator for sales growth over the next two to three months.

Rigid PCB shipments were down 5.3% year-over-year in September, while orders fell 1.8%. Year to date, rigid board shipments decreased 4.7%, and orders increased 0.8%. Sequentially, shipments were up 10.3%, and orders were flat. The rigid book-to-bill ratio slipped to 1.0.

Flexible PCB shipments for the month were down 19.9%, and orders were down 20.9% compared to September 2011. Year to date, flex board shipments decreased 5.8%, while orders dropped 9.7% year-over-year. Sequentially, shipments increased 5.3%, and orders were down 4.4%. The flex book-to-bill ratio dropped to 0.71.

“North American PCB sales in September continued below 2011 sales, but improved over the preceding month, following normal seasonal patterns,” said Sharon Starr, IPC director of market research. “Sharp declines in flexible circuit orders over the past three months pushed the overall PCB book-to-bill ratio below parity,” she added, “but the volatility of the flex business means this effect will probably be short-lived.”

Rigid PCBs represent an estimated 90% of the current industry in North America, says IPC. In September, 80% of total PCB shipments were domestically produced. Domestic production accounted for 79% of rigid and 83% of flex board shipments in September.

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