BANNOCKBURN, IL – North American printed circuit board shipments in April decreased 4.5% year-over-year, and orders fell 8.3% from April 2011, says **IPC**.

Year to date, industry shipments were down 6%, and orders were up 0.8%. Sequentially, shipments for April decreased 10.6%, and orders decreased 13.5%.

The April book-to-bill ratio decreased slightly, but continued in positive territory at 1.04.

A ratio of more than 1.00 suggests that current demand is ahead of supply, which is a positive indicator for sales growth over the next two to three months.

Rigid circuit board shipments were down 3.6% year-over-year, and orders decreased 8.6% compared to the same month in 2011. Year to date, rigid PCB shipments decreased 5.8%, and orders increased 1.2%. Sequentially, rigid shipments decreased 10.5%, while orders decreased 13%.

The book-to-bill ratio for the North American rigid PCB industry remained above parity at 1.03.

Flex circuit board shipments were down 13.8%, and orders were down 5.2% compared to April 2011. Year to date, flex shipments decreased 8.9%, and orders decreased 2.4%. Sequentially, shipments decreased 10.9%, while orders were down 18.8%.

The flex book-to-bill ratio remained high at 1.16.

“April PCB sales and orders in North America continued slightly below last year’s levels and reflected normal seasonal patterns,” said Sharon Starr, IPC director of market research. “The good news is that the book-to-bill ratio continued to be positive for the fifth consecutive month. When orders exceed sales, there is potential for sales growth over the next three to six months.”

Rigid PCBs represent an estimated 89% of the current industry in North America. In April, 83% of total PCB shipments reported were domestically produced. Domestic production accounted for 82% of rigid PCB and 85% of flex board shipments.