

Reuse Safety Guidelines

Supporting the implementation of reuse systems
for food and beverage packaging for take-away



www.reusevanguardproject.eu

Value chain stages

Follow the lifecycle of reusable packaging — from production to quality assurance.

Reusable Packaging Type



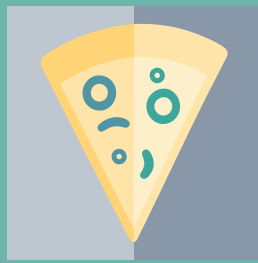
CUPS

Hot and cold
beverages



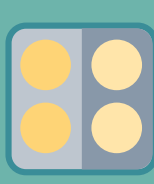
FOOD CONTAINERS

Bowls and
burger boxes



BOXES

Pizza boxes



SPECIALISED CONTAINERS

Sushi boxes, sensitive
food containers



STAGE 1

Manufacturing - Manufacturers & Distributors

Responsible for: material selection, design, testing, and providing safe reusable packaging

KEY REQUIREMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- Material safety and performance:
- Food-grade/food-contact approved materials only
- Remain food-safe after repeated washing
- Microbiological limits enforced (e.g., ≤5–10 kBE)
- Thermal stability and integrity across intended use conditions (-20°C to 100°C)
- Avoid chemicals of concern (UP Scorecard Tier 1)
- Provide usage and deterioration instructions

PERFORMANCE TESTING

- Dishwashing resistance
- Microplastic shedding
- Thermal cycling/aging
- Chemical migration under stress
- Sensory impact (odour, flavour, colour transfer)



STAGE 2

Reuse System Operators

Responsible for: ensuring quality, traceability, and operational safety during the reuse lifecycle

KEY REQUIREMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- Select only certified, compliant packaging
- Define washing and logistics protocols
- Maintain traceability and safety data for all items
- Conduct regular inspections to assess packaging integrity, hygiene, and food safety
- Apply removal criteria for degraded or unsafe items
- Ensure end-of-life handling: proper sorting, recycling, preference for closed-loop systems



STAGE 3

Collection & Transport

Responsible for: safe collection and transportation to prevent cross-contamination between used containers

KEY REQUIREMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- Clean transport vehicles
- Separation of clean/used packaging, temperature control if required, and handling damaged/contaminated items



STAGE 4

Washing & Sanitisation

Responsible for: safe cleaning and sanitisation of reusable packaging

KEY REQUIREMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- HACCP-compliant washing processes
- Wash at ≥65°C (thermal disinfection) or use validated alternative
- Develop and validate material-specific washing protocols
- Conduct microbiological testing and residue checks
- Ensure complete drying before redistribution



STAGE 5

Staff & Facility Requirements

Responsible for: maintaining hygiene, training, and proper operational environment

KEY REQUIREMENTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- Mandatory initial and refresher training
- Handwashing and Personal Protective Equipment protocols
- Competency verification for inspections
- Training on end-of-life criteria and quality issues
- Separate areas for used, washed, and clean packaging
- Air quality control and pest control
- Controlled storage conditions (dry, dust-free, properly stacked)
- Regular maintenance of equipment and facility



STAGE 6

Quality Assurance & Documentation

Responsible for: maintaining proof of compliance and continuous improvement



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