

An Overview of the UK Packaging Waste Regulations

Introduction

The UK Packaging Waste Regulations were introduced with the aim of:

- Reducing the amount of packaging waste going to landfill
- Controlling the amount of heavy metals used in packaging
- Ensuring packaging fulfils its essential requirements

There are three sets of regulations in place:

- The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2007 (as amended)
- The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007 (as amended)
- The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2015

Who is affected?

The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2007

These regulations affect any organisation that owns packaging, supplies it to other legal entities and:

- Has a UK turnover in excess of £2 million per year
- Handles more than 50 tonnes of packaging per year
- Performs a relevant activity on any packaging handled (raw material manufacturer, converter, packer/filler, seller, importer)

Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2015

These regulations affect organisations that:

- Pack or fill packaging and place it onto the UK market (including brand/trademark owners)
- Import packaging which is already packed or filled
- Recondition packaging
- Are the manufacturer or authorised representative (only in certain circumstances)

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What do you need to do?

The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2007

1. Register with the appropriate environment agency
 - a. England – The Environment Agency (EA)
 - b. Scotland – The Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
 - c. Wales – The Natural Resources Body for Wales (NRW)
2. Complete an annual data submission detailing the amount and material type of packaging you have handled
3. Calculate the number of tonnes of packaging waste your company must finance the recovery and recycling of – this is known as your ‘obligation’
4. Purchase recycling evidence (called Packaging Waste Recovery Notes (PRNs)) to meet your obligation
5. Submit the recycling evidence to the relevant environment agency

Please note: organisations have the option to register and submit evidence directly to the relevant environment agency or they can join a Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS), such as Valpak, who carry out points 1, 3, 4 & 5 above.

The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2007

1. Register with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA)
2. Complete an annual data submission detailing the amount and material type of packaging you have handled
3. Calculate the number of tonnes of packaging waste your company must finance the recovery and recycling of – this is known as your ‘obligation’
4. Purchase recycling evidence (called Packaging Waste Recovery Notes (PRNs)) to meet your obligation
5. Submit the recycling evidence to the NIEA

Please note: organisations have the option to register and submit evidence directly to the NIEA or they can join a Producer Compliance Scheme (PCS), such as Valpak, who carry out points 1, 3, 4 & 5 above.

Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations 2015

Organisations must meet requirements on:

- Minimising packaging volume and weight but still meeting amounts necessary to maintain levels of safety, hygiene and acceptance for the packed product and for the consumer
- The ability to recover or reuse at end of life
- Minimising the release of hazardous substances
- The presence of heavy metals such as lead and cadmium not exceeding permitted levels

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If requested to do so, organisations must provide technical documentation showing how their packaging is compliant with the requirements listed above.

Useful Links

- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) Regulations 2007](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Amendment No. 2\) Regulations 2008](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2012](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2014](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Miscellaneous Amendments\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2017](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2007](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Amendment\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2008](#)
- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Amendment No. 2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2008](#)
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- [The Producer Responsibility Obligations \(Packaging Waste\) \(Amendment No. 2\) Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2017](#)
- [The Packaging \(Essential Requirements\) Regulations 2015](#)
- [Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste](#)

(The link to the Directive directs you to the main page on Eur Lex, however to ensure that you fulfil all requirements please ensure you also take account of the “Relationship between documents” section and in particular the “Amended by” sub-section which can be found by ensuring you are using the “Document information” tab (at the top of the page) and scrolling down.)

EU Exit Legislation

There are a number of amending Statutory Instruments which have been made to amend legislation so it operates post- EU Exit. We understand that the amending legislation is intended to allow the current system to continue unchanged. The amending legislation can be found on the [UK legislation website](#).

Contact Us

We offer a range of services to assist companies with packaging compliance. If you would like more information about how we can help you please call us on **03450 682 572** or email info@valpak.co.uk.

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This guidance document contains information in summary form and is intended as general guidance only. The guidance does not constitute legal or professional advice on any individual situations and so must not be relied on for decision-making purposes. If you wish to discuss any aspect of the content of this document, please talk to your usual Valpak contact.