



The Producer Responsibility (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2007

Enacted: 15 March, 2007; into force: 16 March, 2007

1 What the law covers:

- Rules for “obligated producers” to recover and recycle packaging waste in order to meet national targets
- Requirements for designers to minimise the environmental impact of packaging

The Regulations represent the application of the European Union’s Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive (94/62/EC) in the UK, and the assigning of producer responsibility obligations to certain businesses that handle large amounts of packaging.

2 What is packaging waste:

Packaging is anything that is used to contain and protect raw materials or a product and is thrown away after the product is consumed.

Packaging waste can be made out of a wide variety of materials including:

- Paper, board, wood, glass, metals, plastics, cork, hessian, jute, ceramics

And includes:

- Boxes, pallets, labels, containers, tubes, bags, sacks, tape, wrapping, binding and tying material

3 Who must adhere to the regulations:

Any business that “handles obligated packaging” must register and comply, as an obligated producer, if they:

- Handle more than 50 tonnes of obligated packaging a year, and
- Have a turnover of more than £2 million per annum (includes cumulative group turnover if applicable)

Examples include:

- Manufacturers
- Converters
- Importers
- Pack-fillers
- Sellers (as part of the supply chain or to the end user)

(Obligated packaging doesn’t include waste, exports or reused packaging unless it is imported.)

Packaging designers must also follow the applicable environmental regulations to both minimise packaging and aid in its recovery and re-use, e.g. by making sure it is re-usable, recyclable or biodegradable.

4 Why it’s important for all businesses:

Businesses must be aware of, and comply with, all applicable waste regulations – both national and sector specific – in order to operate lawfully in the UK.

The following Acts can be considered interrelated, so businesses should have clear policies and procedures that take them into account, as applicable.

- The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 2007
- The Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2011
- The Waste (Scotland) Regulations 2012

Organisations’ waste management strategy should include the necessary staff training and keeping up to date on any regulatory amendments and/or updates.

5 How to comply:

If you meet the criteria of an obligated producer, you must:

- Register with the Environment Agency as an obligated producer, or join an approved compliance scheme on an annual basis
- Purchase sufficient packaging waste recovery notes (PRNs) or their export equivalent (PERNs) – available through a compliance scheme or from accredited reprocessors and exporters

NB: Shred-it is not a compliance scheme, however, as many of its customers are caught under the Regulations it has produced this fact sheet to raise awareness of the requirement.



6 Offences/penalties for non-compliance:

Enforcement is targeted against those businesses that consistently operate outside the law and risk harm to health or the environment.

Waste crime includes fly-tipping, the operation of illegal waste management sites and the illegal export of waste.

Penalties for non-compliance with Packaging Waste and other Waste Regulations include:

- Issuance of enforcement or prohibition notices
- Refusal to register, or revoke the registration of, an existing waste carrier
- Ability to seize vehicles suspected of involvement in fly-tipping and waste crime
- In addition the Environment Agency also received new powers in 2011 that allows it to impose civil sanctions, including financial penalties of up to £250,000 for serious offences

For more information:

EU Commissioner for the Environment – ec.europa.eu

Environment Agency – environment-agency.gov.uk

Scottish Environmental Protection Agency – sepa.org.uk

Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland – doeni.gov.uk

7 How Shred-it can help:

Shred-it provides advice and services that can contribute to an effective waste management strategy, including the secure destruction of paper and card products that can then safely enter the recycling stream.

Every Shred-it location is a registered waste carrier with the Environment Agency (EA) (or SEPA in Scotland or NIEA in Northern Ireland).

Our services also include secure document and hard drive destruction and recycling, designed to protect your and your customers' confidential information, whilst at the same time minimising your environmental impact. Call us for more information.

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