

# Packaging Reduction Guidelines

Environmentally Sound Packaging is packaging developed by employing the following strategies:

1. **Sustainable packaging design,**
  2. **Use of sustainable material inputs,**
  3. **Sustainable production strategies,**
  4. **Use of sustainable transportation, and**
  5. **Sustainable end-of-life strategies.**
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1. **Sustainable packaging design** shall be considered to have taken place if the vendor has:
    - (a) Eliminated unnecessary packaging and reduced packaging in weight. Packaging should be designed in such a way that it uses a minimal amount of packaging materials, with 15% weight reduction from the 5 year baseline serving as a minimum target reduction goal. Reduction in packaging weight may also apply to the amount of materials used to ship and deliver an item.
      - (i) Activities that can be taken to achieve this include, but are not limited to:
        1. Reduced use of pallets;
        2. Use of polywrap or shrinkwrap to reduce packaging size;
        3. Use of bag packaging over box packaging where applicable;
        4. Reduce additional layers of packaging through product labeling;
        5. Reduce the use of additional boxes by attaching containers together; and
        6. Use of air pillows (box sized).
    - (b) Increased cube utilization. This shall mean that the number of products or the volume of a product that can fit in a given unit of packaging required for transportation has increased from the baseline.
    - (c) Achieved a high efficiency ratio. This shall mean that the vendor has achieved an efficient percent product to percent packaging ration, by weight, with 90% product to 10% packaging as the target efficiency ratio.
  2. **Use of sustainable material inputs** shall be considered to have taken place if:
    - (a) The source of materials used to make the packaging is known. For example, it is possible to track the chain of custody through official source-certification or through endorsement by a certification program.
    - (b) Packaging has increased recycled content. As an example, vendors should seek to use composite pallets and totes in boxes.
    - (c) Packaging has increased renewable content. This shall mean that some component of the packaging material is made using renewable resources, or those replenished at a rate equal to or greater than the rate of depletion.
    - (d) Key target substances are eliminated from packaging. Such substances include, but are not limited to: polystyrene foam (commonly known as styrofoam) packaging (e.g. packing peanuts) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

- (e) Toxic substances are eliminated from packaging. This shall mean substances that can damage a living organism or an entire ecosystem.
- 3. Sustainable production strategies** shall be considered to have taken place if the manufacturer can ensure, during manufacturing activity:
- (a) Protection of water-stressed areas. This shall mean that the packaging production facilities are not located in areas defined as water-stressed according to the Global Water Tool or the ETH Water Scarcity Index.
  - (b) Minimized freshwater consumption. This shall mean that documented efforts have been taken to reduce freshwater use.
  - (c) Decreased total energy use. This shall mean that documented efforts have been taken to reduce energy use.
  - (d) Renewable energy use. This shall mean that documented efforts have been taken to increase renewable energy use, including but not limited to the following types: biomass, hydropower, geothermal energy, wind energy and solar energy.
  - (e) Decreased air emissions of target substances. This shall mean that documented efforts have been taken to reduce air emissions.
- 4. Use of sustainable transportation** shall be considered to have taken place if:
- (a) Transport is EPA Smartway certified.
  - (b) There is increased renewable energy use during transport, e.g. through use of alternative fuels or hybrid vehicles.
  - (c) There is decreased fossil fuel consumption during transport. This may apply to the transportation of the packaging itself to the product-manufacturer, the final packaged product to retailers, or the final packaging product from retailers to city agencies. For example, through:
    - (i) delivery route optimization, or
    - (ii) increased fuel efficiency.
- 5. Sustainable end-of-life strategies** shall be considered to have taken place if
- (a) Customers are appropriately informed about packaging disposal. An example of this is an easily visible label used to communicate to customers the appropriate disposal method in a clear, understandable way.
  - (b) Packaging is reusable. If capable, vendors may also seek to unpack delivery items and collect materials (cardboard, plastic wrap, pallets) upon delivery to be used again in the future.
  - (c) Packaging is recyclable. That is, that the packaging is made of material which meets New York City Department of Sanitation recycling standards. Packaging composed of more than one type of material shall not be considered recyclable unless each material in the packaging represents a substantial part of the packaging
  - (d) Packaging is certified compostable according to ASTM D6400 standards for compostability. This should only be pursued if the agency receiving the goods is also receiving organics collection.