Packaging Essential Requirements

The Packaging (Essential Requirements) Regulations were introduced in Ireland in 1998 as part of an amendment to the Waste Management (Packaging) Regulations 1997. Article 9.1 of EU Directive 94/62 on packaging requires member states to ensure that only packaging which complies with all of these Essential Requirements may be placed on the market.

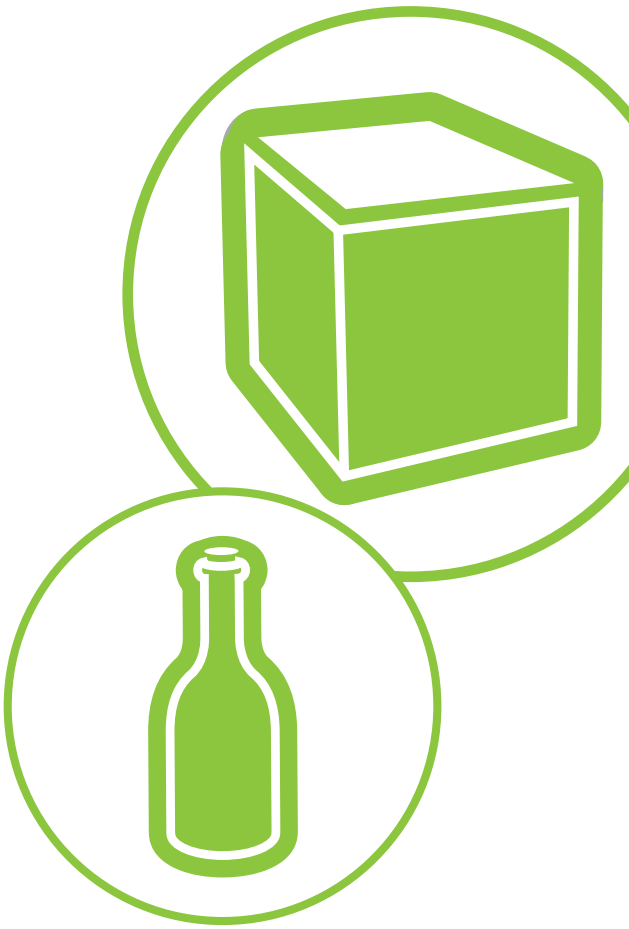
The legislation obliges packer/fillers of packaging, importers and 'own brand' retailers to ensure that packaging and individual packaging components (parts of packaging that can be separated by hand or by using simple physical means) meet certain specific standards.

The Essential Requirements can be summarised as follows;

- Packaging weight and volume must be reduced to the minimum necessary for safety, hygiene and consumer acceptance of the packaged product.
- Hazardous substances and materials must be minimised as constituents of packaging, with Annexe II laying down specific limits on named heavy metals
- Packaging must be suitable, as deemed by the CEN Standards, for at least one of the following – material recycling, energy recovery or organic recovery.
- Packaging which is claimed to be reusable must be suitable for that purpose and for at least one of the three recovery methods specified above.

In Ireland, the Local Authorities have responsibility for the enforcement of the Essential Requirements and are entitled to ask the obligated companies for a report of packaging composition and all relevant technical supporting documentation. Local Authorities are empowered to prosecute companies found in breach of the Essential Requirements. In this instance, inappropriately packaged goods could be removed from the marketplace and/or fines imposed.

A more detailed guide to the Essential Requirements is available at www.preventandsave.ie



Repak

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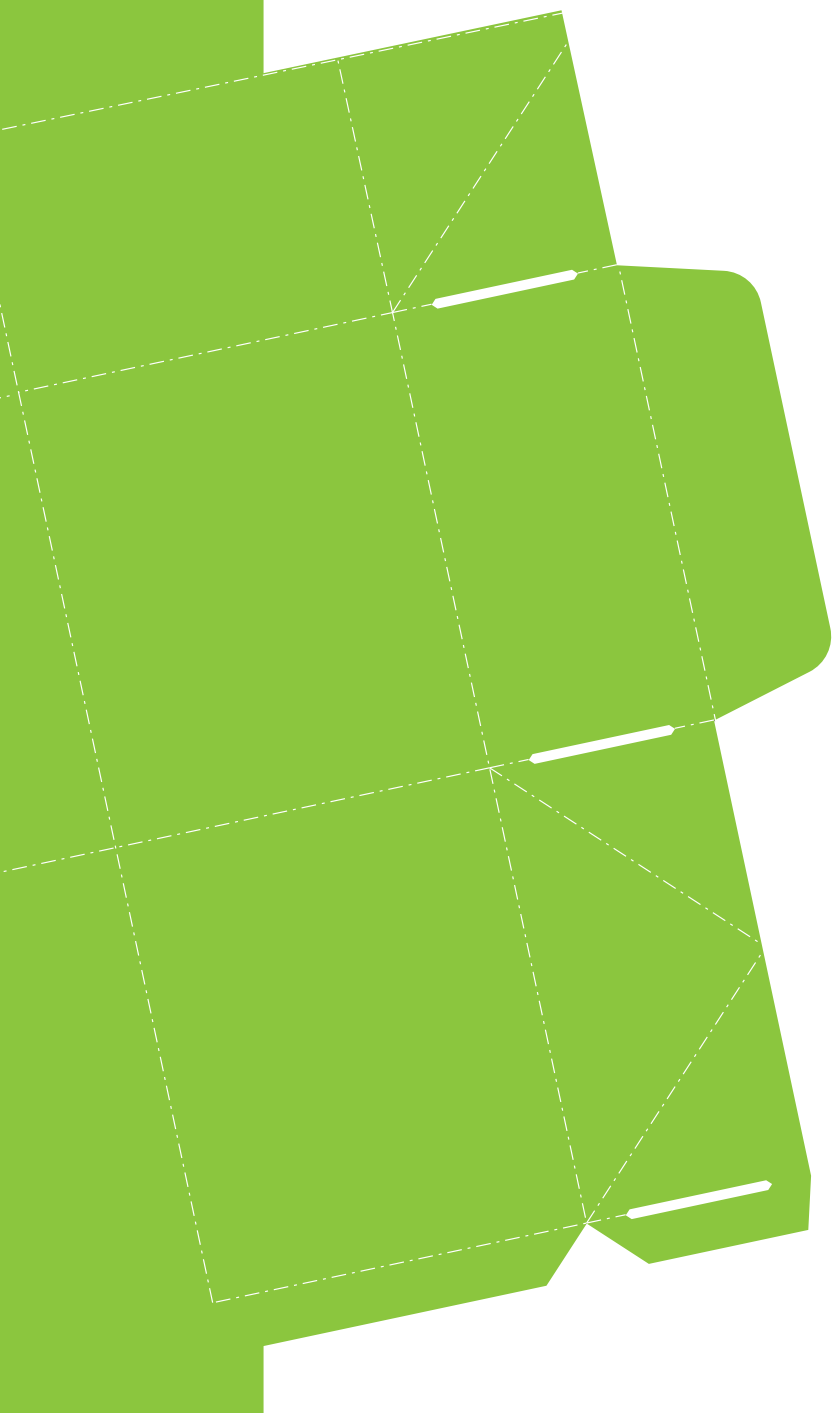
MEMBERS FUNDING PACKAGING RECYCLING

How Repak Helps Members Meet the Packaging Essential Requirements



Repak makes every effort to ensure that its members have an impact on the reduction of non-reusable, non-recyclable packaging and are actively working to keep their packaging output in line with the Essential Requirements.

Repak's 'pay by weight' fee structure gives an economic incentive to its members to use minimal materials in the packaging process. This provides the impetus for Irish business to move away from over-packaging.

Packaging Prevention Measures

Repak provides a packaging prevention service, to its member companies. This consists of packaging technology advice, site visits and packaging optimisation training courses. These facilities help members to optimise their packaging systems so that they have a minimal impact on the environment. Further information can be found at **www.preventandsave.ie**

Awareness Campaigns

Repak run advertising campaigns and local initiatives, aimed at increasing awareness among consumers about the part they play in contributing to the reduction of packaging waste. Successful campaigns include Repak Recycling Week, the Repak Recycling Awards and sponsorship of the An Taisce Green Schools Programme. This generates a sense of responsibility towards the environment amongst consumers, whose demands for more environmentally sound packaging play a large part in instigating changes and reductions within the production process.

By running awareness campaigns and providing prevention services, incentives and rewards for companies playing their part in adhering to the Essential Requirements, Repak's members are aided in their efforts to reduce packaging waste.