

Repak Members' Plastic Pledge Guidelines for Irish Hotel Federation Members

1. Introduction

A circular economy is where the value of products, materials and resources is maintained in the economy for as long as possible and the generation of waste is minimised. It also embraces the concept of waste as a resource and secondary raw material, to be reused and recycled in a more sustainable manner, in the manufacture of new products.

It is a shift away from the linear model 'take, make and dispose' which relies on a steady supply of natural resources to create products and packaging.

In 2015, the European Commission adopted an ambitious new Circular Economy Package. The following year, negotiation of both the legislative proposals and the proposed Action Plan took place with the Member States and the European Parliament. The results of this process can be found in ['Closing the Loop' An EU action plan for the Circular Economy.](#)

The key aims of the CEP are to:

- reduce waste and protect the environment;
- boost global competitiveness and foster sustainable economic growth;
- stimulate investment and generate new jobs;
- save energy, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and tackle climate change.

The key areas of focus of the CEP are as follows.

- The whole cycle: from production and consumption to waste management
- The market for secondary raw materials
- A revised legislative proposal on waste

The Circular Economy Action Plan

In March 2019, the European Commission published a comprehensive [report on the implementation of the Circular Economy Action Plan](#), outlining the main achievements under the Action Plan and setting out future challenges.

What does the CEP mean for Repak members?

The CEP contains revised legislation on waste and a comprehensive plastics strategy, both of which impose new obligations and targets for Repak and its members.

[The revised legislative framework](#) on waste entered into force at EU level in July 2018. It sets clear targets for reduction of waste and establishes an ambitious long-term path for waste management and recycling.

It includes the following: -

- The Waste Framework Directive 2018 (including Eco Fee Modulation) – which will increase the levels .
- Packaging and Packaging Waste Directive 2018 – due for transposition into Irish law by the 5th of July 2020.
- Single Use Plastics (SUP) Directive 2019 – due for transposition into Irish law by the 5th of July 2021.

Repak has already developed initiatives, campaigns and strategies to help meet our obligations, including the [Repak Members' Plastic Pledge](#).

2. The Repak Members Plastic Pledge

Repak's Plastic Pledge has five key objectives: -

1. Prioritise the prevention of plastic packaging waste by minimising avoidable single use packaging and promoting packaging reuse where possible.
2. Support Ireland to deliver the **Circular Economy Package** plastic recycling targets of 50% of all plastics by 2025 and 55% of all plastic packaging by 2030, as set by the European Commission.
3. Reduce complexity within the plastic packaging supply chain by simplifying polymer usage and eliminating non-recyclable components in all plastic packaging by 2030.
4. Help to build a **circular economy** for used plastic packaging in Ireland and Europe by increasing the use of plastic packaging with a recycled content.
5. Ensure our approach to plastic packaging reduction is aligned to Ireland's goal of a 50% reduction in food waste by 2030 as set out in Ireland's food waste charter.

What Steps Can a Hotel Take?

Steps differ for each of the five objectives however the below tips might be useful as a place for hotels to start. Not every hotel will be able to achieve all five objectives of the Plastic Pledge or do so to the same degree.

A tailored approach will be required and this can be supported by Repak's Prevent & Save team. See www.preventandsave.ie for more information on the on-site survey programme which is available free of charge as part of Repak's member services.

3. Where to Begin

Objective 1

Objective 1 is about the avoidance of unnecessary plastic packaging waste. There are a number of ways that hotels can consider preventing plastic waste specifically but can adopt the same thought process for packaging waste reduction in general. The essential first step here is to engage with your suppliers and inform them of what you are trying to do.

Single Use Plastics

The [Single Use Plastics Directive](#) will see bans and restrictions on a number of single use plastic items used extensively by the hospitality industry from 2021.

Repak's Plastic Pledge is asking our members to be proactive around this by eliminating items proposed for a ban (plastic cutlery, plastic straws, plastic plates and containers and cups made from expanded polystyrene) but also by considering whether or not your guests really need or care about the single use materials such as plastic sachets of sauces or disposable cups that you may be providing them with at present.

Examples of alternatives to items that will be banned under the SUP Directive include wooden cutlery, paper straws and paper plates. Please note that current interpretation of the legislation suggests that compostable plastic cutlery is not exempt from the legislation.

Where possible use sauce dispensers or bottles and use ramekins that are size appropriate and do not increase food waste. If you provide take away coffee in your restaurant or bar, consider a penalty or incentive system to reward guests or members of the public who bring in reusable cups.

Reuse



Consider where you can potentially reuse packaging. Most of this will be from incoming supplies and can include fresh produce that might currently come in bags, being delivered loose in reusable crates.

Shelf life concerns and food waste prevention are the ultimate priorities here but the potential for implementing reusable systems is greatest with your local suppliers and for higher volume produce.

Opportunities on single use items currently provided to guests might include refillable glass bottles as a replacement for single use plastic bottles or laundry bags for guests that are suitable for reuse rather than single use versions. Avoid providing plastic cups if you have bulk water dispensers in the hotel or spa. These are quite often made from polystyrene which is a difficult to recycle plastic.

Minimising Packaging

Minimising plastic packaging may be possible where reuse is not practical. Again understanding what your suppliers can do here is key.

This is not always about reducing or removing plastic from incoming goods, which a supplier may not do just for your hotel (again local suppliers that deliver directly to you may offer the best potential).

This can also be about changing packaging formats to reduce the weight of packaging waste overall - for example moving from a small 1 litre bottle to a 5 litre bottle of orange juice might work for a hotel that goes through high volumes of juice whereas a change from 1 litre to 2 litre might work best for a smaller hotel. Another common example is bulk cooking oil. If you need a small bottle of oil, fill it into a reusable bottle from the bulk dispenser rather than buying in small bottles.

Moving from small bottles of shower gels and shampoos to larger bottles is also an option to reduce the number of these. These smaller bottles are often viewed as premium and large ones are seen as unacceptable to four or five star hotels. Premium offerings in these larger bottles that higher star hotels will accept need to be sourced/ recommended if the industry is serious about these types of changes.



Objective 2

Objective 2 encourages members to recycle well at their premises. To achieve the new plastic recycling targets in the Packaging & Packaging Waste Directive will require the support of businesses. The 2018 EPA Waste Characterisation Study shows that 70% of the material in business general waste bins could be placed in either organic or recycling bins.



[Repak's Waste Management Guide for Hotels](#) and Prevent & Save team can help guide your business in terms of improving management of the different wastestreams.

It is most important to get this right within the building and the key message is that unless you do so contamination levels will be unacceptably high in your outside wheelie bins (as pictured).

In this scenario your waste contractor may be forced to charge your recycling bins at general waste rates. For a hotel, this is an unnecessary added cost that could be avoided.

Objective 3

At present there are many packaging items that are made from either more than one type of plastic or more than one type of material that includes plastic. Such materials are not normally possible to separate and are therefore either not considered recyclable or require specialist and expensive. Objective 3 encourages our members to avoid or minimise such non-recyclable items.

Examples used by hotels include beer mats/ coasters often made from a composite of paper and plastic, single use disposable coffee cups and again sauce sachets that are made from a combination of foil and plastic.

Objective 4

Objective 4 asks our members to incorporate recycled content into their packaging.

Hotels as packaging users rather than manufacturers can help influence this objective by choosing to sell products where recycled content has been incorporated such as by certain bottlers. However in general this is one of the objectives where a hotels influence may be reasonably small.

Objective 5

In Ireland we generate almost 1 million tonnes of food waste every year. UN Sustainable development goal 12.3 aspires to halving food waste by 2030. The EPA's Food Waste Charter urges Irish businesses to turn this into action.

Due to the role played by packaging in the protection of food, objective 5 aims to ensure that all steps taken to achieve objectives 1 to 4 should not impact on the quality or safety of food, reduce its shelf life and increase food waste. Therefore a hotel's preferred choices in achieving the first four objectives must be tested and monitored to ensure that food waste is either maintained or reduced.

FINALLY...

We hope you find this information useful, and we wish you the best success. Through our plastic pledge we can help Ireland to create a new circular economy for plastics that reduces waste and better protects the environment.

If you have any queries with regard to the above document, please contact our Membership Services Department at Repak by ringing 01 4670190 or by e-mailing brian.walsh@repak.ie.