



# Materials Guidelines

Derived from:  
Materials Background for  
Packaging Standards  
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# Aluminum

Aluminum is an acceptable material for use in packaging. Preference should be given to suppliers with the highest amount of post-consumer recycled material, although 100% recycled aluminum can be difficult to source.

# Aluminum Foil

Aluminum Foil and Aluminum Laminate are acceptable materials for use in packaging. Preference should be given to suppliers with the highest amount of post-consumer recycled material.

# Aseptic Containers

Aseptic containers are acceptable packaging materials. However, due to the limited recyclability of these multi-laminate cartons, care should be taken to ensure that any claims are appropriate. General recyclability claims are not acceptable. However, “recyclable where facilities exist” is an acceptable claim, and preferable in markets where facilities do exist.

See <http://www.recyclecartons.com/> for local recyclability information

# Compostable/Tree Free Pulp Board

Compostable board products made from tree-free alternatives such as plant fibers, especially waste fibers, are acceptable materials for use in packaging. These materials are preferable with BPI "Commercially Compostable" certification or "recyclable" certification.

# Ethylene Vinyl Acetate (EVA)

Ethylene Vinyl Acetate is not acceptable for use as a packaging material due to major concerns about the reactivity and safety of its base material. Substitutes include LDPE or HDPE.

# Glass

Glass is an acceptable packaging material which is minimally reactive and abundantly recyclable.

# Nylon/Polyamide

Nylon is acceptable but not preferred for use in packaging. It is most commonly found in lids for plastic (PET) bottles, as the principal material for certain hard and clear bottles, and as a film overwrap.



# Paper/Paperboard

Paper and paperboard are acceptable packaging materials.

# Poly Vinyl Acetate (PVA)

Poly Vinyl Acetate is not acceptable for use as a packaging material due to major concerns about the reactivity and safety of its base material. Substitutes include LDPE or HDPE.

# Polycarbonate

Polycarbonate plastic should be avoided unless no suitable alternatives exist.

Polycarbonate plastics are generally made up of the monomer Bisphenol A (BPA).

For the company's full position on BPA, see <http://www.wholefoodmarket.com/products/bisphenol-a.php> and <http://rock.wholefoods.com/?p=887>

# Polyethylene (HDPE, LDPE)

All Polyethylene products (High Density, Low Density, Linear Low Density and Medium Density) are acceptable for use in packaging and tertiary overwrap.

# Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET)

Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) is acceptable as a material for use in packaging.

# Poly(lactic acid) (PLA) and plant-derived plastics

PLA, and other related plastics derived from plant starch, pose a complex and difficult set of issues. On one hand, they provide a plant-derived alternative to petroleum-derived plastics, but on the other, they are often sourced from energy-intensive and genetically modified corn or other food crops. With PLA, it's critical that you work with the Green Mission and QS teams to ensure that the claims being made are not misleading and do not misrepresent the environmental benefits of the material.

# Polypropylene (PP)

Polypropylene (PP, #5), is accepted for use as a packaging material, but #1 PET and #2 HDPE may be suggested as alternatives.

Because #1 and #2 plastics are still more commonly accepted for recycling, PP should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

# Polystyrene (PS)

Polystyrene (#6, styrofoam) is unacceptable due to its non-recyclability and questions about its safety.



# Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)

PVC is only acceptable where no suitable alternatives exist, due to its limited recyclability. For packaging, alternatives include other, recyclable plastics such as PET or HDPE, and for pallet overwrap, LDPE is an alternative. With plastic wraps for products such as cheese, PVC is the only material capable of sufficiently protecting and preserving the product.

# Steel/BPA

Steel is acceptable as a material for packaging. BPA is acceptable in can linings but should be avoided where functional alternatives exist. Please note that while BPA-free can linings are a growing category, BPA epoxy remain the only suitable material for can linings for certain categories of food.