

Factsheet | Essential Requirements

October 2015

The essential requirements are criteria that stem from the European Directive on Packaging and that have formed part of the Packaging Decree (Besluit Beheer Verpakkingen) since 2006.

As soon as you make a packaged product available on the (European) market, you automatically declare that it complies with the essential requirements. If not, you are in violation. The Human Environment and Transport Inspectorate supervises compliance.

Essential Requirements, working on a process

The essential requirements specify that you must implement a process to ensure, on a continual basis, that the packaging used is the most optimal for the environment, with consideration for the following criteria¹:

1. Manufacture and composition of packaging:

- The packaging is manufactured in such a way that the volume and weight are as low as possible, while complying with functional requirements in terms of safety, hygiene and acceptability of the packaged product;
- The packaging is suitable for re-use², recycling³ or recovery⁴, with minimal environmental impact;
- The packaging is suitable for incineration or landfill⁵ and thus contains no harmful substances.

2. In respect of re-use of packaging, the following criteria must also be met:

- The characteristics of the packaging make it suitable for re-use;
- The packaging can be produced in compliance with labour regulations;
- If the packaging is no longer being used and has thus become waste, it must comply with the criteria for recovery.

3. Recovery of packaging material:

- A certain percentage of the weight of the used

packaging material can be used again, or;

- The packaging must generate energy when incinerated⁶, or;
- The packaging can be composted in a way that does not hinder composting activity.⁷
- Biodegradable packaging waste must be physically, chemically, thermally or biologically degradable to the extent that the largest component of the resulting compost ultimately disintegrates into carbon dioxide, biomass and water.

To comply with the essential requirements, companies can implement a process themselves, or make use of the NEN standard 'Packaging - Requirements specific to manufacturing and composition– prevention by source reduction' (NEN-EN 13428).

Further information

The Netherlands Institute for Sustainable Packaging (KIDV) has produced a series of factsheets on the criteria for packaging, such as the so-called essential requirements. This series consists of seven factsheets.

You can download the factsheets from our website, www.kidv.nl (Library – Factsheets).

The Packaging Waste Fund has developed a guide for the Essential Requirements, you can find more information [here](#).

You can find the footnotes for this factsheet on the reverse.

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¹ This is a simplified summary, the official version can be found in Annex II of the European Directive on Packaging, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31994L0062&from=EN>.

² **Re-use:** *any operation by which packaging, which has been conceived and designed to accomplish within its life cycle a minimum number of trips or rotations, is refilled or used for the same purpose for which it was conceived, with or without the support of auxiliary products present on the market enabling the packaging to be refilled; such re-used packaging will become packaging waste when no longer subject to re-use* (source: [94/62/EG](#)); or, in other words, the re-use of packaging in the same form as that in which it was introduced to the market the first time, for example, by refilling.

³ **Recycling:** *the reprocessing in a production process of the waste materials for the original purpose or for other purposes, including organic recycling, but excluding energy recovery* (source: [94/62/EG](#)); or, in other words, the re-use of the packaging material for a new application, for example, regranulation.

⁴ **Recovery:** *in this case, all applicable operations as provided for in Annex II.B Directive 75/442/EEG* (source: [94/62/EG](#)); This annex is entitled 'Useful Applications' and contains a list of operations to which it refers, including, amongst others: primary use as fuel or another means of energy generation, recycling/recovery of organic substances not used as a solvent (including composting and fertilization with other bioconverted substances), recycling/recovery of metals and metal compounds, etc.

⁵ The National Waste Management Plan stipulates that the minimum standard for the processing and treatment of packaging waste is: useful application through re-use of material. You can find more information in sector plan 41 of the National Waste Management Plan2 <http://www.lap2.nl/sectorplannen/afval-huishoudens/verpakkingen/>

⁶ **Energy recovery:** *the use of combustible packaging waste as a means to generate energy through direct incineration, with or without other waste, but with the recovery of heat* (source: [94/62/EG](#)); or, in other words, incineration with energy recovery.

⁷ Compostable packaging must meet a standard in order to carry the compostable seedling logo: EN 13432.