



For the future of our environment

# 2026 monitoring plan for Producer Responsibility Packaging and Packaging Waste Regulations

December 2025

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## SEPA duties and powers

SEPA is the appropriate agency under the regulations in Scotland. It has a duty to monitor compliance of businesses in Scotland that have obligations including Scottish based producers directly registered with SEPA and any UK producers registered with SEPA approved compliance schemes, as well as Scottish reprocessors and exporters. Definitions of producers, compliance schemes, reprocessors and exporters are provided in Annex 1.

## Summary of SEPA duties in regulation of producers

Ensure that obligated companies:

- Join the system by registering.
- Provide accurate organisational information.
- Provide accurate data on types and categories of packaging they place on the UK market.
- As large producers, they undertake recyclability assessment of their household packaging.
- Submit relevant reports to SEPA in prescribed format and predefined periods as required by the regulations.
- Meet their prescribed recycling targets by procuring evidence of recycling from accredited reprocessors and exporters and thus contribute to the UK recycling targets.
- Direct registrants submit their certificates of compliance.

## **Summary of SEPA duties in regulation of Producer Compliance Schemes (PCS)**

Ensure that any PCS registered with SEPA:

- Fulfils legal obligations on behalf of their producer membership.
- Maintain systems and processes and have approved plans in place to deliver their compliance service to their members.

## **Summary of SEPA duties in regulation of Reprocessors**

Ensure that reprocessors comply with their statutory requirements including requirements to:

- Register.
- Recycle packaging to the required standards.
- Report on amount and types of packaging recycled in each prescribed period.
- Meet the conditions of registration.
- Apply to be accredited if they wish to issue packaging recycling notes (PRNs).
- Have auditable systems and processes to account for PRNs they issue, and their prices vs the fate of the type and amount of packaging they have recycled.
- Meet the conditions of accreditation.

## **Summary of SEPA duties in regulation of Exporters**

Ensure that exporters comply with their statutory requirements including requirements to:

- Register.
- Export packaging for recycling to overseas sites with broadly equivalent to standards at UK permitted recycling sites.
- Report on amount and types of packaging exported for recycling in each prescribed period.
- Meet the conditions of registration.
- Apply to be accredited if they wish to issue packaging export recycling notes (PERNs).

- Have auditable systems and processes to account for PERN's they issue, and their prices vs the fate of the type and amount of packaging they have exported for recycling at an overseas site.
- Meet the conditions of accreditation.

## **SEPA planned monitoring work for 2026 compliance year**

Our monitoring activities are carried out by the Producer Compliance and Waste Shipment Unit (PCWSU). The PCWSU's compliance work is funded by charges that are levied on the regulated customers as provided in the charges under [regulation 13](#) and [Schedule 1](#) of the regulations.

Main compliance monitoring work for the 2026 compliance period is summarised below.

### **Producers and compliance scheme registration**

Registration deadline for large producers for the 2026 compliance period was 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025. As part of granting the registrations, the PCWSU has been checking that companies that have applied for registration are obligated as producers and that the information they have supplied about the business types and legal structure is accurate and reflects the type of packaging they handle. We will continue assessing any late registrations and will undertake a similar activity after 1 October 2026 for the 2027 applications for registration.

The unit will also investigate and follow up on any producers who fail to register for 2026 but were previously registered for 2025 compliance period.

We will assess compliance scheme registrations to make sure that the scheme's application has met the regulatory requirements including submission of an updated operational plan outlining how they intend to achieve compliance on behalf of their producer membership.

## **Producers and compliance scheme data checks**

Producer and compliance schemes are required to submit data on packaging they handle firstly in the first half of the year from January to June, followed by data on packaging handled in the second half of the year from July to December. These reports are submitted covering the first half of a compliance year by prescribed deadlines of 1st October for (H1 submit data) and by 1st April in 2026 for the second half (H2) data submissions.

Our compliance monitoring data checks will commence immediately after each of the submission deadlines of both H1 and H2. We will assess all the data submitted by our direct registrants and we will select a representative sample of our compliance schemes members for assessment based on a risk profiling approach.

We will routinely check for significant variances between reporting periods, for example H1 vs H2 or H1 of a compliance period vs H1 of a different compliance period, focusing on reported tonnages per material, consistency of reported packaging material types and justification of any outlying variations including the consistency of interpretation and reporting of household and non-household definitions.

We will also check that producers who have confirmed at registration that they are obligated for disposal costs have correctly reported data relating to their household packaging and have undertaken recyclability assessments.

## **Recyclability assessments methodology (RAM)**

We will be checking producers with disposal cost obligation are reporting RAM outputs on household, binned packaging as well as household glass drinks containers. As our knowledge on the reports and product improves with time we will be comparing RAM reports from producers with similar products for consistency and will request resubmissions where we identify error.

Our initial approach will be to work with producers and compliance schemes to ensure approach taken to producer RAM results is in line with the guidance supplied by the Scheme Administrator PackUK.

## **Procurement of evidence notes**

SEPA will monitor compliance progress of directly registered producers and schemes against their recycling obligations. Where required SEPA will proactively provide advice and guidance to ensure that recycling obligations are met.

## **Producer audits**

Our audits will focus on producers that are based in Scotland which includes those registered with the other jurisdictions by any UK compliance scheme. We will prioritise based on risk profiling which may consider factors like persistent errors, inconsistent reporting, size of obligation or complexity of data set amongst others.

Our audits will also include RAM assessment where relevant, to make sure that producers can provide evidence that they have correctly assessed their packaging in line with the available guidance.

Where we identify significant errors either from the audit or from our data verification efforts, we will request a resubmission from the producer or their compliance scheme.

## Reprocessors and Exporters

Our compliance monitoring for reprocessors and exporters is split into 2026 registrations and accreditations work that we commenced on 1 October 2025 and work that we plan to undertake in the 2026 compliance period.

Reprocessors and exporters have a mandatory requirement to register with SEPA if, in the course of their business, they are receiving packaging waste for reprocessing or exporting it for recycling outside the UK.

Operators who wish to issue evidence of recycling or export for recycling can opt in and apply for accreditation.

Since 1 October 2025, we have been processing applications for registration and accreditation of reprocessors and exporters for 2027. This involved scrutinising the applications to make sure that only operators who meet the requirements are granted approvals. We intend to complete processing these so that approvals for those who applied on time, are ready from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2026.

We will continuously assess reprocessor and exporter compliance in 2026 and key activities will include the following:

- Ensuring that accredited operators continue to be a fit and proper person.
- Bringing non-compliant operators into compliance for example non registered operators based in Scotland.
- Assessing reports submitted by operators on the amount of packaging waste they have managed.
- Checking and verifying that exporters are sending packaging waste to approved overseas recycling sites that operate at broadly equivalent standards to sites in the UK and that they are complying with International Waste Shipment regulations.

- Assessing that evidence issued by accredited operators is in line with the conditions of accreditation.
- Process applications for registrations and accreditations for 2027 compliance period.
- Undertake physical audits of our operators on a risk-based approach.

## Our enforcement approach

SEPA will seek to work with obligated businesses to ensure compliance by providing timeous advice and guidance. Where SEPA encounters non compliance then any required enforcement action will be proportionate and in line with our published enforcement policy.

## Capacity development

As part of developing and improving capacity of regulatory officers, we plan to incorporate training on new PCWSU officers on wider pEPR and SEPA duties, and more detailed training to the rest of the unit on recyclability assessment methodologies. We will also plan training incorporating the new amendments to the current pEPR regime.

Other pieces of work for 2027 also include:

1. Publication and maintenance of public registers for producers, compliance schemes, reprocessors and exporters
2. Development and publication of a pEPR monitoring plan for 2027 compliance period
3. Continue working with other regulators; Scottish Government and DEFRA; PackUK to review progress, and respond to emerging issues, and support further legislative and policy developments.
4. Providing guidance as and when required to our regulated customers including responding to queries

5. We will be looking for and bring into compliance any free riders i.e. any companies who fit the description of a packaging producer, and therefore should be registered under the pEPR regime.

## Annex 1

### Definitions of producer, compliance scheme, reprocessor and exporter.

1. **Producer** means any UK organisation annually that imports or supplies more than 25 tonnes of packaging on to the UK market and has an annual turnover of £1 million or more and carries out any one of the following packaging activities:
  - a. supply packaged goods to the UK market under their own brand
  - b. places goods into packaging
  - c. imports products in packaging
  - d. owns an online marketplace where non UK businesses sell good into the UK
  - e. hires or loans out reusable packaging
  - f. supplies empty packaging
2. **Compliance scheme** is an organisation that offers compliance services on behalf of their members by taking on legal liabilities for most of the producer responsibility obligations.
3. **Reprocessor** means a person who carries out one or more recycling activities on packaging waste.
4. **Exporter** means a person who, in the ordinary course of business, exports packaging waste for recycling outside the United Kingdom

### Further information

- [Enforcement information on the SEPA website](#)
- [pEPR Regulations](#)



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