



Middlesex-Essex

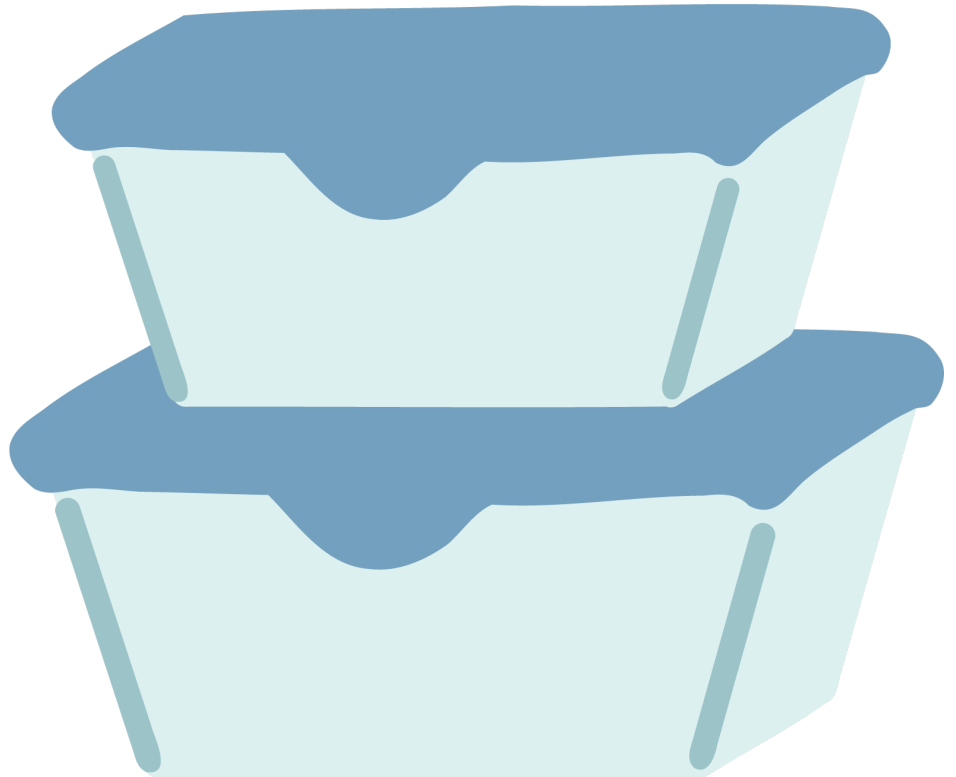
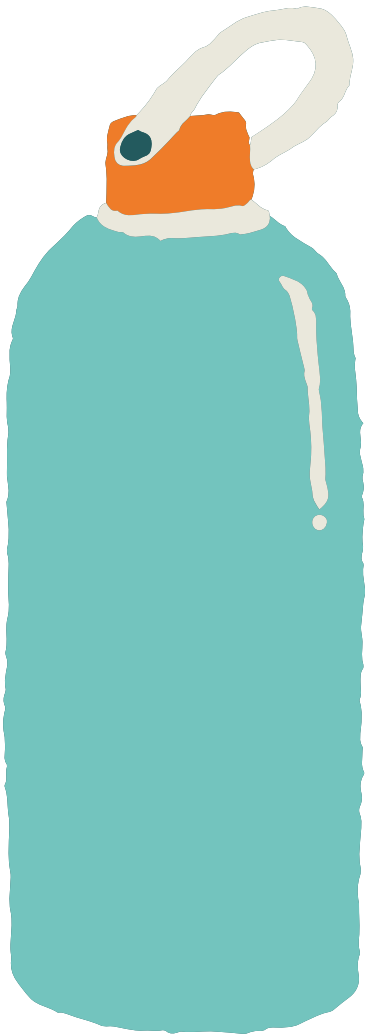
Public Health Collaborative

Andover. North Andover. Reading. North Reading. Haverhill. Lynnfield

Reusable Containers

Manual

A guide to rules & regulations pertaining
to reusable takeout containers





Contact Info

The Middlesex-Essex Public Health Collaborative works to regionalize public health efforts for the communities of Andover, North Andover, Reading, North Reading, Haverhill and Lynnfield.

If you have questions about safe food handling for your establishment, please reach out to your respective Health Department.

Andover

36 Bartlett St, Andover, MA
(978) 623-8640
health@andoverma.gov

North Andover Andover

120 Main St, North Andover, MA
(978) 688-9540
healthdept@northandoverma.gov

Reading

16 Lowell St, Reading, MA
(781) 942-9061

North Reading

235 North St, North Reading, MA
(978) 957-5242

Haverhill

4 Summer St, Haverhill, MA
(978) 374-2338

Lynnfield

55 Summer St, Lynnfield, MA
(781) 334-9480



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Purpose

This manual is designed to provide foodservice operators, management and personnel with guidelines on how reusable takeout containers can be implemented at foodservice facilities in order to reduce the environmental burden of single use containers.



Requirements for Reuseable Containers

Inspecting Containers

Reusable containers must be inspected by an employee prior to use to confirm the container meets requirements and that the item is still eligible as of last use

When inspecting containers

- Ensure container is resistant to corrosion, is durable, and that it is nonabsorbent
- Surfaces of container should be smooth and easy to clean and sanitize
- Ensure container is durable to withstand repeated washing either by manual washing or ware washing systems
- Check for damaged sections such as cracking, denting beyond use, lid that does not fasten securely, heavy scratching or scoring, pitting, distortion, or decomposition

If a container does not meet inspection

- If container is newly purchased the establishment can return to their supplier or otherwise dispose of the containers
- If the container has been used prior to failing the inspection, then it should be properly disposed of and removed from the reusable container cycle.
- If it is a consumer beverage cup then the establishment has the right to either refuse use or rinse on sight following the rules stated on page 6.



Containers cannot be cracked



Containers cannot be severely dented



Containers cannot be chipped

Consumer Containers

Consumers and facilities are allowed to use consumer provided cups/beverage containers as long as they fall within the requirements of accepted reusable containers, are made to handle hot or cold beverages, and pass visual inspection from an employee.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

Consumer Beverage Containers

If a consumer's beverage container passes visual inspection it is not necessary to rinse the container prior to use. The container should be free of visible debris, cracking, chipping, or pitting.

If the container does not pass visual inspection:

- A facility can choose to rinse the container
- To rinse, facilities can use methods such as
 - Iodine: 12.5-25 ppm (above 25 ppm is considered toxic)
 - Chlorine: 50-100 ppm (above 100 ppm is considered toxic)
 - Quaternary ammonium: 200 ppm
 - Hot Water Sanitizing: The surface of the dishes must reach 160F. This usually means the dial must reach 180F



Dishes must come in contact with chlorine sanitizers for 10-seconds and quaternary ammonia or iodine for 30-seconds.

Food Containers

Reusable food containers must be cleaned in establishment prior to use. When cleaning and sanitizing food containers facilities need either a mechanical dishwasher or a manual warewashing (three-bay sink).

Sanitation Requirements

- Requirements for cleaning and sanitizing reusable containers follow the same rules as in-house durables
- Containers must be air dried after sanitization

Storage

Storage Prior to Cleaning & Sanitizing

Containers should be stored similarly to house durables and separate from clean containers, food prep areas, and away from other contaminants.

Storage After Cleaning & Sanitizing

Food containers should be stored separately from other items such as food, dirty containers or dishes, and cleaning supplies.

Store containers :

- Away from contamination or allergen risks
- In non-food contact areas (counters, dining tables) until use

Filling and Packaging

Filling Consumer Beverage Containers

Beverage containers may be filled by an employee or the consumer as long as they follow the contamination free filling process outlined by the Massachusetts Food Code.

When filling and packaging

- Containers provided by consumers should not come into contact with back of house prep spaces at any point during interaction.
- Consumers should not be provided access to food prep spaces.

Other Reuseable Food Containers

Reusable containers should be filled and packaged in the same manner as in house food. This includes the containers being filled in the same prep area and that the same precautions should be taken to prevent cross contamination and allergen considerations.

Allergens

Food allergies are very serious. There are 9 major food allergens:

- Dairy products
- Eggs
- Seafood
- Shellfish
- Wheat
- Soy
- Tree nuts
- Peanuts
- Sesame



Be aware of where these ingredients are used in your food items. The 2022 FDA food code requires that food operators provide written notification of the presence of major food allergens as an ingredient.

For more information on how to safely prepare items for customers with food allergies, please go to www.foodallergy.com. If you have a customer with an allergic reaction, always call 911.

Reusable Containers & Allergens

When packaging reusable food containers for consumers with food allergies be aware of cross contamination and make consumers away of the use of reusable containers rather than a single use container.

Reusable Container Implementations

Reusable Cups

Reusable Cups:

- Can be a customer's own cup as long as it meets guidelines
- Can be personal cups that you sell to customers
- Once it has passed visual inspection it is ready to use

Partnering with a Reusable Container Company

There are multiple companies within the United States who are partnering with food establishments in the use of reusable takeout containers. These companies have slightly differing modes of filling this service. If the partnering company is providing the containers they must still pass requirements of a reusable food container and be cleaned and sanitized on site of establishment prior to use.

These are examples of reusable takeout container companies working with restaurants

- Recirclable
- DeliverZero
- Forever Ware
- Lexington Zero Waster Collaborative

Purchasing Reusable Containers

Establishments may purchase their own reusable containers. When purchasing containers they must meet the requirements of a reusable food container. Companies may need to think about a way to incentivize consumers to use the program and return the containers to location once they are no longer using the containers.

Thank you!

Your role in food safety is important. As a food worker or manager, it is your responsibility to make sure that the food you serve is safe to eat. By reading this manual, you are taking an active role in learning how to safely prepare and serve food for the public.

Resources

Partnering with a company

- <https://www.recirclable.com/>
- <https://www.deliverzero.com/>
- <https://foreverware.org/>
- <https://www.lexzerowaste.org/zerotogo/>
- <https://www.usefull.us>
- <https://ozzireuse.com>

List of places to purchase takeout containers

- <https://www.webstaurantstore.com/793/reusable-to-go-containers.html?srsId=AfmBOooU6e-jWrB4PybLsAnvNZKYaMWE0THEefLxIJWsb2MDserebs5g>
- <https://www.gofoodservice.com/c/reusable-to-go-containers?srsId=AfmBOop8twpUdwY5dCMNdqkYCTColZrl4veyU3P90duxUgcQ7KElwPDI>
- <https://preservefoodservice.com/>

Reusable cup sort of rewards system like Starbucks

- <https://www.closedlooppartners.com/nextgen/>
- <https://savrcup.com/#>
- <https://morrisoncup.com/reusable-plastic-cups-for-restaurants>
- <https://crestline.com/b/cups>
- https://www.flasky.com/custom-travel-cups?device=c&device_model=&network=g&campaign=usa-optm-travel-cup-flasky&adgroup=custom&keyword=customized%20reusable%20cup&matchtype=p&loc_user=9001881&loc_int=&campaignid=16650245968&adgroupid=135638146275&keyworddid=kwd-416312430168&gad_source=1&gbraid=0AAAAAD3NxE4mBcSyNMVrYXoxnQIEe4lqg&gclid=CjwKCAiAn9a9BhBtEiwAbKg6fiB5YEK3HH_a_B8Y_m1i2qdSoGj3PZwI0nCtw_WsZ21ISY36V5dm5RoCqkwQAvD_BwE

Operations, Food Code, and Sanitation Information

- <https://www.ehs.wvu.edu/files/d/57fcb685-c66f-4215-85ff-94d33339ebfe/sanitizersetup.pdf>
- <https://recyclingworksma.com/reusable-containers-guidance/>
- <https://www.mass.gov/doc/merged-food-code-111618/download>
- <https://www.foodprotect.org/media/guide/cfp-guidance-document-singlepages-final0623.pdf>