

MEHR WEG



TRAINING MANUAL ON THE HANDLING OF REUSABLE PACKAGING IN THE FOOD SERVICE INDUSTRY



TABLE OF CONTENT

What can you find here?

1. Overview of reusable packaging solutions
2. Hygiene measures in the handling of reusable packaging
3. Hurdles and tips in the handling of reusable packaging
4. New law about reusable packaging 2023
5. Contact information

MEHRWEG MUC – THE INFORMATION PLATFORM ABOUT REUSABLE PACKAGING IN MUNICH



Dear gastronomers and food retailers,

let's take the reusable route together in Munich. We have developed this training brochure to ensure that your employees are well-informed about the handling of reusable packaging. This enables you to train your employees easily and independently - at any time. The brochure also contains links to videos that will enable you to handle reusables safely.

We want to support you as best as we can - so don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or uncertainties either by e-mail mehrweg@rehab-republic.de or by phone +49 179 429 26 12.

Kind regards
The Mehrweg MUC Team



OVERVIEW OF REUSABLE PACKAGING SOLUTIONS

There are now several types of reusable systems that you can use in your business. Be sure to communicate to your employees which solution(s) you offer and train them accordingly.

Essentially, there are three different options:

1. CUSTOMERS' OWN CONTAINERS

How to make reusable packaging easily accessible and cost-effective? Simply by filling customers' own containers (e.g. Tupperware box) that they bring on their own. The advantage is that you don't need to incur any additional costs and you don't have to wash any containers.

The initiative "[Einmal ohne, bitte](http://www.einmalohnebitte.de)" signs stores and restaurants, where customers can buy baked goods, cheese, sausages and other food without the product's own packaging by simply bringing their own packaging. They provide you with a sticker for your front door and mark your shop on a digital map.



2. POOL SYSTEM OF REUSABLE PACKAGING

There are many different providers of so-called pool systems of reusable packaging. The principle is simple: for a membership or usage fee, they provide you with reusable bowls and cups, which you then hand-out to your customers either for a deposit or via an app. You also take-back bowls and cups from the system you hand-out. After the return, the reusable dishes are washed and can then be provided to your customers again. This creates a closed-loop system in which there is no waste for food packaging. Learn more about the different providers on our webpage.

3. OWN SYSTEM OF REUSABLE PACKAGING – INDEPENDENTLY OR IN COOPERATION WITH OTHER GASTRONOMERS

Is Do-it-yourself your motto, also when setting up your own deposit system? That's possible, but it needs to be well thought-out. The packaging must meet certain minimum requirements.

They have to be

- food-safe (recognizable by the glass fork symbol)
- neutral in taste and smell
- easy to close/leak-proof
- heat-resistant (if hot food is to be filled in)
- easy-to-clean
- suitable for dishwashers
- stackable
- and robust (break-proof and scratch-proof).

The packaging can be made of a variety of materials or bought from different suppliers. A cooperation with other caterers is also possible.



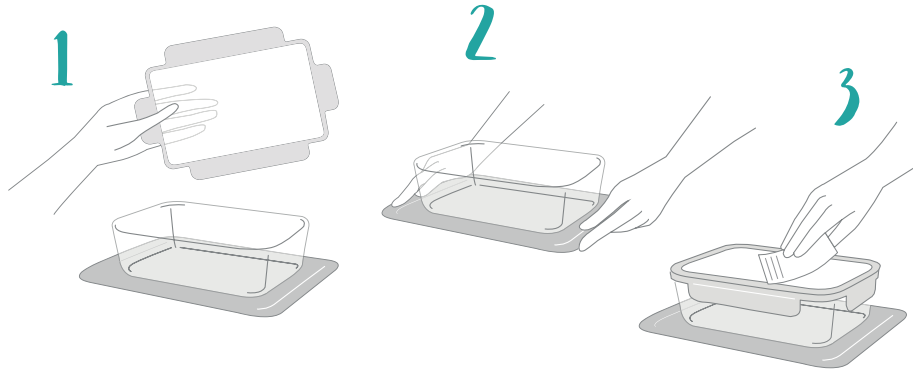
There are various providers in Munich. The most established are currently: RECUP/REBOWL, Relevo, Vytal. You can find more information on our homepage at <https://mehrwegmuenchen.de/mehrweglosungen/>.

HYGIENE MEASURES IN THE HANDLING OF REUSABLE PACKAGING

Depending on the system you have chosen, there are different hygiene rules to follow.

1. FILLING CUSTOMERS' OWN CONTAINERS

Observing hygiene rules in the food service is critical! With our instructions, you can handle the customers' own containers correctly and make an active contribution to avoiding packaging waste.



HANDLING DURING FOOD SERVICE

1. Receive the containers in a specially defined area of the counter
OR
provide your customers a "hygiene tray" (intended and designated only for this purpose) on which they can place their opened containers. They remove the lid themselves and keep it while you fill the container.
2. Fill the containers with the products. Maintain only as much contact with the containers as is necessary.
3. The customers receive their containers back at the defined area of the counter or via the tray.

Important rules:

- The customer's container must be clean.
- The customer's container must not be damaged.
- You are allowed to refuse dirty and/or broken containers.
- The customer's container cannot simply be placed behind the counter.
- Use a tray on which the customers place their container, with which you can then take the container behind the counter.

Hygiene:

- When weighing products, do not place containers directly on the scales. A base must be used (e.g. the hygiene tray).
- After each use, the defined area of the counter and the hygiene tray must be cleaned.
- Further, the general hygiene rules for your business also apply, especially for the service area (e.g. hand hygiene).
- In general, it is important that the business complies with the strict European hygiene regulations in order to prevent any pathogenic bacteria or residual soiling from entering the sales area or production area via the containers that are brought in.

In this video the hygienic operational process is explained step by step:

youtube.com/watch?v=kGx4fY-OWF4

HYGIENE MEASURES IN THE HANDLING OF REUSABLE PACKAGING

2. SERVING, CLEANING AND TAKING BACK REUSABLE CONTAINERS

When dealing with used and uncleaned reusable containers, it is particularly important to minimize the risk of contamination of the environment and the food offered as much as possible. As a general rule, you are responsible for hygienic operational processes until the food is dispensed.

RETRIEVING

- If you work with a pool system provider (e.g. RECUP/REBOWL, Relevo, Vytal, ...), you are required to accept all containers from this provider - regardless of whether they were served by your establishment or not.
- The customers show you the containers and lids they brought and you inspect them.
- Up to 24 hours after ordering, customers may return the used containers without washing them. If it takes longer than a day, they should rinse them briefly with water before returning.
- If the returned containers are moldy, dirty, or damaged, you can refuse to accept them. Collect damaged containers separately to facilitate their recycling.
- If the returned containers are in good condition, they should be collected separately until they are cleaned (e.g. in a container intended only for this purpose). This way, the dirty and the hygienic areas are kept separate.
- Depending on the pool system provider, you either return the deposit to your customers or your customers scan the QR code on the containers or on the return sign to confirm the return to the customer's account.

SERVING

- When serving, reusable tableware must be treated like normal porcelain or disposable tableware. Thus, check that it is clean and in good condition.
- Depending on the pool system provider, when you hand out the food and drinks you either charge a deposit, or you / the customers scan the QR code on the containers to link them to the customer's account on the corresponding app.

CLEANING

- In principle, the current hygiene regulations must be observed at all times.
- Used reusable containers should be cleaned at the end of the working day at the latest.
- They may be put in the dishwasher together with the company's own dishes.
- The storage areas and containers for returned dishes must be cleaned regularly and disinfected if necessary.

More information can be found here:

The campaign „Essen in Mehrweg“
[esseninmehrweg.de/wp-content/uploads/
_Factsheet_Nutzung_Mehrweg_Poolsystem.pdf](https://esseninmehrweg.de/wp-content/uploads/Factsheet_Nutzung_Mehrweg_Poolsystem.pdf)

In this video the hygienic operational process is explained step by step
youtube.com/watch?v=kGx4fY-OWF4

HURDLES AND TIPS IN THE HANDLING OF CUSTOMERS' OWN CONTAINERS

Here is an overview of the main reasons why customers don't use their own containers when buying or ordering food, and how you can take action:

LACK OF CLARITY

Customers do not know that their own containers and reusable containers are accepted or allowed.

- This is your chance! Every time you talk to a customer, you have the opportunity to make a change! Ask them to bring their own container and explain that they can be used easily and safely when buying or ordering food.
- Place the advertising material of „[Einmal ohne, bitte](#)“ in a clearly visible place (e.g. the counter or the entrance door); this notice creates transparency and clarity.

CONCERNS ABOUT HYGIENE

Is it really safe and hygienic to fill customers' containers? This may not be a problem for the customers per se but it's an issue nonetheless. Here's what you can do about it:

- The flyers and leaflets of the nationwide non-profit initiative „[Einmal ohne, bitte](#)“, can be handed-out to service staff and customers to help clarify the issue of hygiene.
- Use the recommended tray system; this gives the customer first-hand experience of how simple a hygienic procedure can be.

OLD HABITS

Everyone has been there - the container is left at home or is not in the handbag during a spontaneous shopping trip.

- Create incentives! A discount for bringing your own container will certainly ensure acceptance of taking the extra step.
- Creative solutions for spontaneous shopping are also possible: for example, a small station for collecting donated (and clean!) containers could make spontaneous shopping without packaging possible.

More information can be found here:

Food federation Germany
[lebensmittelverband.de](https://www.lebensmittelverband.de)
Forsa survey on the use of customers' own containers.

The campaign „Essen in Mehrweg“
esseninmehrweg.de

Handbook to promote the use of reusable packaging
esseninmehrweg.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Handreichung_Nachfrage-steigern.pdf

In this video we show you how you can incentivize your customer's use of reusable packaging
youtube.com/watch?v=NYeLKLh-N6w

HURDLES AND TIPS IN THE HANDLING OF THE OWN SYSTEM OR A POOL SYSTEM OF REUSABLE PACKAGING

Have you decided to use your own reusable system or a reusable pool system? Great! Make it known and attractive to your customers, and make the service and return process as easy as possible for your employees. Here are some strategies to achieve this and increase the demand for reusable packaging:

ADAPT INTERNAL OPERATIONS TO INCLUDE REUSABLE PACKAGING

In order for the handling of reusable packaging to run smoothly, it should be clear and uncomplicated for your employees. Take this opportunity to work with experienced staff to establish a service and return process that makes sense for everyone involved. For example, you can place reusable containers within easier reach than disposable packaging. This way, reusable packaging quickly becomes a natural thing! To ensure that future employees are well-informed, plan a training session on the topic of reusable packaging.

MAKE REUSABLE PACKAGING VISIBLE

There are many ways to make your offer of reusable containers visible. For example, you can place reusable bowls and cups in a prominent place (e.g. on the counter or next to the cash register).

In addition, you can put up posters to inform customers about the use of reusable packaging.

MAKE REUSABLE PACKAGING CHEAPER

Financial incentives are of course always effective.

With a surcharge on single-use products and/or a discount on reusable containers, you can quickly increase the popularity of reusable packaging among your customers.



OFFER REUSABLE PACKAGING IN CONVERSATIONS WITH CUSTOMERS

Every customer conversation is an opportunity to inform about the available reusable packaging options. For example, if you are taking a to-go order, you can also ask directly if the food should be taken away in reusable containers.

LAW ABOUT REUSABLE PACKAGING 2023 AT A GLANCE

Since January 2023, there is a new law to offer reusable containers (§33, §34 Verpackungsgesetz). What this means for you depends on the size of your business and the number of employees.

IN GENERAL, THE FOLLOWING APPLIES:

- If you offer food and drinks to-go in single-use plastic containers, you must also offer
- reusable containers.
- You can join an existing pool system or use your own reusable plastic/glass packaging.
- Reusable packaging must not cost more than single-use packaging. Discounts on single-use packaging are not acceptable!
- The offer of reusable containers must be made visible (e.g. with a sign on the door or at the counter).
- You must accept used containers from the system you offer. Collect the containers separately and/or put them directly in the dishwasher.
- As always, general hygiene rules apply.

EXEPTION:

Your business has a sales space of up to 80 square meters and you have a maximum of 5 employees (full-time equivalents).

IN THESE CASES, THE FOLLOWING APPLIES:

- You must fill customers' own containers.
- The offer must be made visible (e.g. with a sign on the door or at the counter).
- The containers that your customers bring must be clean before you fill them. You are allowed to refuse dirty or defective containers.
- As always, general hygiene rules apply. For example, you can use a tray for serving the food.

CONTACT

mehrweg@rehab-republic.de
mehrwegmuenchen.de/

A project of:
rehab republic e. V.
c/o LABORbüros / Tür 2
Dachauer Str. 112d
80636 München
rehab-republic.org

In this video we explain the new law about reusable packaging that takes effect in 2023

youtube.com/watch?v=wIbUnBp9jIA

Free information material

mehrwegmuenchen.de

FAQ about the new laws to offer reusable containers

mehrwegmuenchen.de/mehrwegangebotspflicht-betriebe/

Legal text

gesetze-im-internet.de/verpackg/_33.html

gesetze-im-internet.de/verpackg/_34.html

