



March 20, 2020

Reusable Packaging Association Statement on COVID-19 and the Reuse of Transport Packaging

The Reusable Packaging Association (RPA) is offering information to explain that the commercial application of reusable packaging following recognized [best practices](#) for handling and cleaning does not increase the risk of exposure or infection by the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The [Food & Drug Administration](#) (FDA) has stated that “there is no evidence of food or food packaging being associated with transmission of COVID-19.” According to the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), as there is “poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from products or packaging that are shipped over a period of days or weeks at ambient temperatures.” The virus spreads mainly from person-to-person through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. When present, the coronavirus is “easily inactivated by simple household disinfectants.”

Reusable packaging in commercial operations is managed in a system that ensures its integrity for the intended purpose, including effective sanitation for food packaging. Any presence of the coronavirus is killed and removed during wash and sanitation processes, which occur after each product use, that typically involve high-pressure wash machines, high water temperatures, cleaning detergents, and EPA-approved sanitizers. Commercial wash operations are monitored and tested daily to meet the highest standard of safety for food contact packaging.

The non-commercial reuse of packaging that is outside an established system, such as a consumer’s personal reusable shopping bag, presents a different handling scenario. With COVID-19, the contamination potential is from exposure to the virus particles through direct contact or airborne transmission in proximity to the human source. The virus spread does not discern between a product’s reuse or single use, or even between a shopping bag or an article of clothing. If contaminated, CDC recognizes that “it may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.”

We are confident about the safe use of reusable packaging in commercial applications. In addition, we encourage compliance with CDC and local health officials’ direction to be diligent when contacting all objects, whether reusable or single use, by rigorously following [steps to protect](#) yourself including frequent and proper hand-washing, refraining from face touching, and avoidance of close contact with others during this heightened time of viral activity.



About the Reusable Packaging Association (RPA). RPA is a non-profit trade organization representing and promoting the common business interests of member suppliers, users and service providers of reusable transport packaging products and services. Since 1999, RPA has been a collaboration between supply chain partners to promote the use and value of reusable packaging systems. RPA works to expand markets by raising awareness of the benefits of reuse, to spur innovation through best practices and process optimization, and to validate impact based on industry research, modeling and case studies. For more information, visit the RPA website at reusables.org.

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