

Extended Producer Responsibility

Information for Producers

Overview

Extended producer responsibility (EPR) shifts the physical and financial burden of collecting, sorting, processing and recycling waste to product producers and away from local governments and taxpayers. Alberta's new EPR system will focus on single-use products, packaging and paper products, as well as hazardous and special products.

EPR means producers take responsibility at end-of-life for the products and packaging they put on the market. EPR programs incent producers to design products that are more durable and recyclable so materials and components can remain in the economy for as long as possible.

Alberta's government has engaged with producers and other stakeholders on EPR. Producers are aware of their obligations and the transition to EPR.

Timelines

The EPR Regulation comes into force on November 30, 2022. The Alberta Recycling Management Authority (ARMA) will be granted new oversight functions. Program details, including system establishment and delivery, will be finalized over the next two years. The next steps include developing bylaws, producers developing their collection and processing plans and contracts, and communities registering to participate in the EPR system.

Producers of single-use products, packaging and paper products from residential sources, and hazardous and special product producers will have two years to plan and implement systems to start in spring 2025.

Obligated Producers

Producers of designated materials are obligated producers under the regulation. A producer of a designated material will be the brand owner, if the brand owner is resident in Canada. Where there is no brand owner, a producer hierarchy is used to identify the obligated producer. After brand owner comes importer, followed by retailer.

Responsibilities

Producers will be fully responsible (financially and operationally) for the collection and management of their designated products after consumer use. Producers will also be legally liable to deliver collection services and for achieving performance standards (e.g., for single-use products, paper and packaging materials). Producers will be responsible for educating Albertans on the new systems.

Producers will be responsible for collecting, consolidating, sorting, and finding markets for material collected.

Producer Responsibility Organizations

While producers will be individually responsible for their regulatory obligations, they are able to join producer responsibility organizations (PROs) to act on their behalf to administer the system to collect, process, and market their designated materials. Producers can join existing PROs or create a new PRO to efficiently discharge their regulatory obligations by working with other producers.

Examples of PRO activities include: developing and entering into material collection contracts, and providing performance reporting to the oversight organization.

Exemptions

Exemptions will help achieve desired outcomes of EPR and consider concerns that have been raised from stakeholders.

EPR does not apply to charitable organizations, producers below an annual gross revenue threshold in Alberta, or producers supplying less than a minimum threshold amount per year for a given material (e.g., paper, plastic, glass and metal). Alberta's government is working with the ARMA to publish specific thresholds.

Small businesses qualifying for an exemption will not have to financially contribute to recycling costs under an EPR system but may be required to register, report and/or keep records.

The ARMA is responsible for determining the exemption process in its bylaws. For example, producers may need to register, report or keep records to demonstrate proof of exemption.

Single-use Products, Packaging and Paper Products

EPR will include residential products only. Materials from the industrial, commercial and institutional sector are excluded. Examples of single-use products include straws, utensils, plates, bowls, cups, and party supplies. Packaging includes items like food containers, foil, and wraps. Examples of paper products are flyers, brochures, booklets, catalogues, newspapers, and magazines.

Hazardous and Special Products

Hazardous and special products include batteries, corrosive products, corrosive product containers, flammable products, flammable product containers, pesticides, pesticide containers, toxic products, and toxic product containers limited to consumer sizes typically found in retail stores.

Exclusions

EPR does not include material currently designated under an existing provincially-regulated recycling program, including beverage containers, electronics, paint and paint containers, tires, and used oil material.

More information

Alberta Environment and Parks will continue to engage interested stakeholders to implement the EPR regulatory framework.

Contact AEP.RecyclingRegulation@gov.ab.ca for more information.