

Alberta's Extended Producer Responsibility Regulation

Information about transition and implementation

Introduction

Alberta's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Regulation came into force on November 30, 2022. It requires obligated producers to have systems in place for single-use products, packaging and paper products (PPP) and hazardous and special products (HSP) by April 1, 2025.

This fact sheet provides information on anticipated transition and implementation timelines and general information as it relates to the EPR Regulation. Any questions can be emailed to AEP.RecyclingRegulation@gov.ab.ca.

Implementation

Implementation for PPP will occur in two phases.

Implementation for HSP will mirror PPP Phase 1 timelines.

Phase 1	Phase 2
Includes registered municipalities with existing recycling services in place as of November 30, 2022.	Includes registered municipalities without existing recycling services in place as of November 30, 2022.
No charge for service.	No charge for service.
Service must be provided by April 1, 2025.	Service must be provided by October 1, 2026.
Type of collection (for example, depot or curbside) must be consistent with the type of recycling service offered as of November 30, 2022.	Type of collection (for example, depot or curbside) will be consistent with existing waste management services.

The EPR transition for HSP will not be phased in.

HSP service will start April 1, 2025. HSP EPR system service must be provided to registered communities by producers at no charge. The type of collection is outlined in the EPR Regulation and may include depots or roundups.

Sequence of key activities

Fall 2023

- The Alberta Recycling Management Authority (ARMA) establishes its bylaws under the EPR Regulation
- Community registration to participate
- Producer registration

Spring 2024

- Producers provide verification of collection and management plans to the ARMA (April 1, 2024)

Spring 2025

- Collection systems for PPP (phase I) and HSP are operational (April 1, 2025)

Fall 2026

- Collection systems for PPP (phase II) is operational (October 1, 2026)

Common collection systems

A common collection system accepts all designated material for a particular EPR system (PPP or HSP). Having common collection systems in place ensures an efficient collection system where Albertans can place all designated material for each EPR system in a single curbside receptacle or take materials to a single collection depot or event, regardless of the brand holder or the type of material.

Alternative collection approaches (e.g. mail-back programs) may be approved by the ARMA. The ARMA can further classify materials through bylaws, which could also allow for alternative approaches to the common collection systems (e.g., classifying expanded polystyrene so it can be dropped off at a depot). The common collection systems for each of PPP and HSP will be managed collectively by all producers or producer responsibility organizations for PPP or HSP, respectively.

The verification of a common collection system for PPP is required by the EPR Regulation and must be provided to the ARMA by April 1, 2024. The verification of a common collection system for HSP will be outlined in the ARMA's bylaws.

Collection costs

Obligated producers must provide collection for PPP and HSP designated materials free of charge to community authorities registered with the ARMA.

Producers will determine if any associated EPR costs are passed along to consumers. If producers pass along the costs through a visible fee they will be required, via bylaw, to provide third party audited financial statements to the ARMA. A visible fee is a fee that appears on the product or receipt at point-of-sale.

Service provision

Community authorities (including municipalities, First Nations Reserves, Métis Settlements, municipal corporations and regional waste service commissions) may continue to play a role as service providers. Depending on any agreements made between a community authority and producers, or a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) on a producer's behalf, a community authority may provide capital infrastructure or services to the EPR system.

Changes to existing service

The EPR Regulation ensures the type of service (e.g. curbside or depot) a community authority was receiving as of November 30, 2022, will be maintained. For example, if a community authority had curbside recycling collection, they will continue to receive curbside recycling collection after EPR is implemented. If they received depot service they must, at minimum, receive depot collection after EPR is implemented.

Curbside collection must occur every two weeks, at minimum. Producers have the flexibility to pick up more frequently if desired or necessary to meet regulated material management requirements.

Future of eco stations

The future of operating eco stations following the launch of EPR systems will depend on municipal choices. Should producers wish to use a community authority-owned eco station to collect designated PPP and HSP materials, they will need to enter a private arrangement with the community authority as a service provider. If producers do not choose to collect designated materials at existing eco stations, the community authority can still choose to operate the eco station to collect materials outside of the EPR framework (including, but not limited to, organics, electronics, mattresses, regulated stewardship materials such as paint, used oil, tires and small electronics).

Collection from First Nations and Métis Settlements

All First Nations reserves and Métis Settlements, including those that may partner with neighbouring municipalities or waste service commissions, are eligible to receive collection service for PPP and HSP, at no direct cost if they register with ARMA.

The timing and type of service for PPP will depend on when they register and what type of existing recycling services were in place on November 30, 2022.

Material management requirements

A material management requirement is the amount of a designated material type that is recycled, downcycled or advanced chemical recycled in accordance with the EPR Regulation, divided by the amount of that designated material type the producer supplied in Alberta for residential use, expressed as a percentage.

Downcycling is the process of converting waste or used materials into products of lesser quality or value than the original material. Downcycling typically occurs when the original material is degraded or contaminated, making it unsuitable for its original purpose. This differs from mechanical and chemical recycling, which involves converting waste materials into similar products.

While downcycling is still a form of recycling, it is generally less desirable because it results in a loss of value and utility for the original material; therefore, no more than 15 per cent of a material management requirement may be achieved through downcycling. Downcycling provides additional flexibility for producers to achieve material management requirements.

For the purposes of the EPR Regulation, advanced chemical recycling means the use of a treatment process to convert plastics into ethane, propane, ethylene, propylene or plastic polymers.

Most chemical recycling technologies will also require an approval from Alberta Environment and Protected Areas, where monitoring and emissions limits would be covered under the terms and conditions of the approval.

Designated materials

Materials currently designated under existing regulated stewardship programs are excluded from EPR. This includes paint, tires, used oil materials and electronics designated in the Designated Material Recycling and Management Regulation and beverage containers designated in the Beverage Container Recycling Regulation.

The EPR regulation does not require collection and management of materials supplied to the industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) sector. To date, EPR has not been used in other jurisdictions for packaging and paper products from the ICI sector in Canada.

Education and promotion of EPR

Producers will be required, through the ARMA bylaws, to educate Albertans on their EPR systems including collection schedules, collection approaches and which materials can be collected. It will be up to producers to determine the best way to communicate their systems to Albertans to avoid contamination of materials and to meet their regulated material management requirements.

More information

If you would like to be added to the EPR stakeholder distribution list, please email AEP.RecyclingRegulation@gov.ab.ca.