

HOW-TO GUIDE FOR RESTAURANTS

Oregon's New Refillable Container Rules

Help your customers reduce waste — and keep your business in compliance — with this guide to Oregon's new rules for accepting customer-provided durable food and beverage containers.

A new state of Oregon law ([SB 545](#)) allows restaurants and food carts to accept customers' reusable food containers for takeout orders, while still meeting Oregon Health Authority (OHA) guidelines. Allowing customers to use their own reusable containers makes them happy, reduces waste, and saves you money.

✓ What's allowed

What's allowed for customer-provided containers:

- **Takeout food:*** Employees can fill visibly clean, durable containers with any type of food.
- **Beverages:** Both employees and customers can fill visibly clean, durable beverage containers.
- **Leftovers:** Customers can pack their own leftovers in personal containers.

**You'll need to create a written plan – see below. (Good news! Written plans are not required for beverage refills or customers packing leftovers in their own containers, though you are required to have a contamination-free process.)*

✗ What's not allowed

What's not allowed for customer-provided containers:

- Customers cannot use personal containers for buffets, salad bars, self-service yogurt machines, or other unpackaged, temperature-controlled foods.
- Employees cannot accept containers that are dirty, chipped, cracked, or not intended for hot food or drinks (if used for hot food or drinks).



Here's how to follow the new rules

1 Create a Simple Plan (Use our free template!)

Write a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to outline:

- How your staff will handle customer-owned containers safely.
- Steps you'll take to prevent contamination.
- How you'll educate customers.

2 Keep your plan onsite

- The state rules require your plan to be kept on-site and available for review by your local public health authority).
- Keep copies of educational signage with your written plan for review by the local health authority.

3 Train staff

- Customer-provided containers must be visibly clean and durable. If used for hot food or beverages the containers must be temperature-appropriate.
- Scoops, tongs, or spouts used to dispense food should never touch consumer-owned containers.

4 Educate customers

- Post a sign encouraging customers to bring their own reusable containers for drinks, bulk foods, and takeaway foods.
- Let customers know containers must be clean and reusable.

5 Learn more about the code

- [OHA's Refilling Returnable Containers Fact Sheet](#)
- [OHA 2024 Oregon Food Sanitation Rules](#)
- [Find your health inspector through your local government.](#)

For more information and resources:

www.choose2reuse.org

