

Packaging Glossary

Packaging Materials



Aluminium: A lightweight and corrosion resistant metal used in packaging due to its excellent barrier properties, which protect products from moisture, light, and air. It is commonly used in the form of foils or cans in flexible packaging, rigid containers, seals, and closures.

Biopolymers or Bioplastics: Polymers that are produced or derived from renewable sources (plants) rather than petrochemical and are therefore often referred to as biobased. Not all biopolymers are biodegradable.

Cardboard: A thick and stiff paper-based material typically made from layers of compressed and glued paper fibres. It is commonly used for packaging boxes and cartons due to its strength and versatility.



Compostable: Materials that are capable of breaking down into natural elements in a composting environment, leaving no visible or toxic residues. Further information can be found through the Australasian Bioplastics Association on Industrial Composting (AS4736-2006) and Home Composting (AS5810-2010).

Cork: A natural and sustainable material harvested from the bark of cork oak trees. It is lightweight, buoyant, and has good insulation properties, making it suitable for certain packaging applications, particularly in the wine and beverage industry.



Expanded Polystyrene (EPS): A lightweight and rigid foam material made from EPS beads. It is commonly used in packaging as protective cushioning for fragile items or as insulation due to its thermal and shock absorbing properties. Note, EPS has been recognised as a problematic material and is listed for phase-out or bans by various levels of government in Australia.



Glass: A transparent and brittle material made from silica and other additives. It is widely used in packaging due to its impermeability to gases and liquids, making it ideal for preserving food and beverages. It is often produced in a cylindrical shape (close to a spherical shape) which provides maximum durability and is easily manufactured.



High Density Polyethylene (HDPE): A thermoplastic polymer in the polyolefin family known for its high strength to density ratio. HDPE is used in packaging for various products, such as bottles, containers, and bags. It is recognised for its resistance to chemicals, moisture, and impact.

High Wet Strength Paper: A type of paper that is treated to possess high strength when wet. It is commonly used in packaging applications where moisture resistance is required, such as packaging for frozen foods or wet products.



Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE): A flexible, transparent thermoplastic polymer in the polyolefin family with low density. LDPE is used in packaging films, bags, and wraps due to its excellent moisture resistance and flexibility.

Polyamides (PA) or Nylons: A family of synthetic polymers known for their toughness, durability, and resistance to wear. Nylons are commonly used in packaging as films or fibres, providing strength and barrier properties.

Paper: A versatile material made from cellulose fibres derived from wood pulp. It is used in various packaging applications, including boxes, bags, and labels.



Polyethylene (PE): A widely used thermoplastic polymer in the polyolefin family with various forms, including high density polyethylene (HDPE) and low-density polyethylene (LDPE). PE is known for its strength, flexibility, and resistance to moisture and chemicals.



Polyethylene terephthalate (PET): A thermoplastic polymer commonly used in packaging, particularly for bottles and containers. PET is lightweight, transparent, and has good barrier properties, making it suitable for beverages, food, and personal care products.



Polylactic Acid (PLA): A biobased polymer derived from renewable sources, such as corn or sugarcane. PLA is often used in packaging as an alternative to traditional plastics as it has the potential to be biodegradable.

Polypropylene (PP): A versatile thermoplastic polymer in the polyolefin family with excellent chemical resistance and high melting point. PP is commonly used in packaging for its toughness, flexibility, and heat resistance.

Polystyrene (PS): A lightweight and rigid plastic often used in packaging as foam or solid sheets. PS provides insulation and cushioning properties, making it suitable for protecting fragile items.

Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)/ Polyvinylidene Chloride (PVdC): A thermoplastic polymer with versatility and durability. PVC is used in packaging for various applications, including bottles, blister packs, and films. It can be rigid or flexible, depending on the specific formulation. Note, some PVC packaging formats have been recognised as problematic and are listed for phase-out.

Rubber: A natural or synthetic elastic material known for its resilience and flexibility. Rubber is used in packaging for applications such as seals, gaskets, or protective cushioning.

Steel: An alloy primarily composed of iron and carbon, with added elements for strength and corrosion resistance. Steel is commonly used in packaging as cans, drums, or closures due to its durability and recyclability.

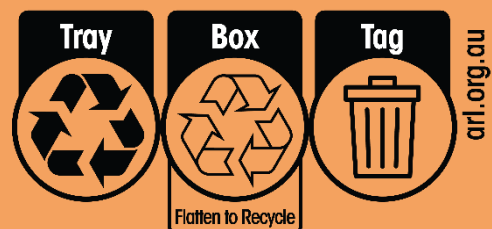


Tin: A metallic element commonly used as a coating on steel cans to prevent corrosion and improve the shelf life of packaged food and beverages. Tinplate, which is steel coated with a thin layer of tin, is a common packaging material.

Wood: A natural and renewable material derived from trees. Wood is used in packaging in the form of crates, pallets, or paper-based materials. It provides strength and can be sourced sustainably.

Australasian Recycling Label (ARL)

An on-pack label that provides easy- to-understand instructions about how to correctly dispose of all components of a product's packaging.





Packaging Formats

Aerosol: A pressurised container that sprays products, typically liquids but can be foam, using a propellant. Aerosols are commonly used for personal care products, cleaning sprays, or air fresheners.

Ampoule: A small, sealed glass or plastic container designed to hold a single dose of a liquid or powder product, often used in the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries.

Bag: A flexible container made of various materials, such as plastic, paper, or fabric that can be sealed after filling. Bags are used for packaging a wide range of products, including food, groceries, clothing, and more.

Band: A strip of material, often paper or plastic, used to secure or wrap around packages or products for added stability or branding purposes.

Bottle: A narrow neck rigid container typically made of glass or plastic, designed to hold liquids or powders. Bottles come in various shapes and sizes and are commonly used for beverages, personal care products, and household cleaners.

Box: A rigid container that encloses its contents. Typically made of cardboard or paperboard, used for packaging, and storing products. Boxes come in different sizes and shapes and provide protection and organisation for various items.

Can: A cylindrical metal container often used for packaging food, beverages, or other products. Cans can be sealed with a pull-tab or a metal end.

Cap: A closure used to seal the opening of a bottle, jar, or container. Caps come in different designs and materials and are essential for maintaining product freshness and preventing leakage.

Capsule: A small cylindrical container or case that is tightly closed or sealed. Sometimes referred to as pod.

Carton: A paper-based container typically made of cardboard or paperboard.

Clamshell: A one-piece container formed of two hinged halves. Commonly made from plastic but can be made from or other materials and are often made to be re-closable.

Clip: A small device, often made of plastic or metal, used to secure, or fasten packaging components together, such as bags, sachets, or tubes.

Collar: A band or sleeve-like component often made of paper or plastic that is placed around the neck of a bottle or container, providing additional branding or product information.

Core: A cylindrical or tubular component often made of cardboard or plastic used for winding or storing materials, such as paper towel, film, tape, or labels.

Cork: A natural or synthetic material used as a stopper or closure for bottles or containers. Cork provides an airtight seal and is commonly used for wine bottles.

Divider: A partition or insert used to separate or organise items within a packaging container, such as boxes or trays, allowing for better organisation and protection of products.

Drinking Straw: A thin tube made of plastic or paper used for sipping or consuming beverages directly from a container.

Drum: A cylindrical or rectangular container, usually made of metal or plastic, with a large capacity used for storing and transporting bulk liquids or powders.

Envelope: A flat, folded, or sealed paper and/or plastic based container used for enclosing documents, letters, or other flat items.

Film: A thin and flexible material often made of plastic used for wrapping, covering, or protecting products. Films can be transparent, opaque, or printed with branding or information and typically less than 75 µm in thickness.

Foam: A lightweight and cushioning material often made of expanded polystyrene (EPS) or polyurethane used for packaging fragile or delicate items. Foam provides protection from impact and vibration.

Foil: A thin and pliable metallic material, typically aluminium, used for wrapping or sealing products to provide a barrier against moisture, light, and oxygen. Foil materials are usually less than or equal to 152 µm in thickness; thicker metal materials are often considered sheets.

Gable Top Carton: A liquid paperboard container commonly used for packaging liquid products such as milk, juice, or soups. Gable top cartons have a distinctive square body and heat-sealed bottom, and triangular shape top created by gusseting and pinching in the two carton sides. When opened, the triangular top is used as a pour spout.

Handle: A grip or carrying component often attached to packaging containers, such as bags, boxes, or bottles, to facilitate easy transportation.

Hook: A curved or bent component often made of plastic or metal used for hanging or displaying packaged products on retail shelves or racks.

Insert: A separate piece or component placed inside a packaging container to provide additional protection, organisation, or product stability.

Jar: A wide-mouthed, cylindrical or square container typically made of glass or plastic, used for storing and packaging various products, such as food, cosmetics, or personal care item.

Keg: A small barrel-shaped container, typically 40 litres or less, often made of metal or wood, used for storing and dispensing beverages, such as beer or wine.

Label: A printed, or adhesive component attached to a package or product, providing information, branding, or instructions. Labels can be made of paper, plastic, or other materials.

Lid - snap on: A closure or cover that securely fits onto the opening of a container using a snap-on mechanism, providing protection and sealing.

Liquid paperboard: Used for packaging various products, such as milk, juice, cereals, and other consumer goods.

Netting: A mesh-like material made of fibres or plastic used for wrapping or enclosing products, particularly produce or delicate items, providing breathability and visibility. Commonly seen in forms such as bags, sleeves or wraps.

Over-cap: A secondary cap or closure placed over the primary cap of a bottle or container, offering additional protection or functionality, such as a flip-top or child-resistant feature.

Pad: A cushioning or protective component often made of foam, paper, or other materials placed inside packaging containers to absorb shock, provide cushioning, or prevent movement. Also used in food packaging for moisture or liquid absorption.

Pail: A cylindrical or bucket-shaped container, typically made of plastic or metal, used for storing and transporting various products, such as paints, chemicals, or food items. Typically, in sizes from 3 to 50 litres.

Pallet: A portable platform on which groups of packages are utilised into a single load to facilitate efficient distribution. Typically made from wood or plastic.

Pod: A small, single-serve container typically made of plastic or aluminium, designed to hold a pre-measured portion of a product, such as coffee, detergent, or dishwasher tabs.

Pouch: A flexible, bag-like container typically made of plastic or foil laminates, used for packaging a wide range of products, including food, beverages, personal care items, and more.

Pull-tab or strip: A small, often perforated strip or tab, attached to a package or container that is used to open or access the contents easily.

Pump: A detachable dispensing mechanism commonly used in packaging for liquid products. Typically consisting of a nozzle or spout and a pumping mechanism to release controlled amounts of the product.

Punnet: A shallow, often plastic container used for packaging and transporting small fruits, vegetables, or berries. Punnets typically have holes or vents for airflow. Commonly seen in form of plastic clamshell.

Reel: A cylindrical or spool-like component used for winding and storing materials such as labels, tapes, or films.

Sachet: A small, sealed packet typically made of foil or plastic, used for packaging single use or small quantities of products, such as condiments, seasonings, or cosmetic samples.

Sack: A large, bag like container made of fabric or plastic used for storing or transporting bulk materials, such as grains, flour, or cement.

Satchel: A small, flat bag or pouch, often made of paper or plastic used for packaging or carrying small items such as jewellery, cosmetics, or pharmaceutical products.

Scoop: A specialised or portioned utensil or small tool often made of plastic or metal used for scooping or measuring products, particularly powders or granules.

Seal: A closure mechanism, often adhesive or heat-activated, used to securely close and protect the opening of a package, ensuring product integrity and tamper evidence.

Sleeve: A tubular or wrap-around component often made of paper or plastic that fits tightly over a product or packaging container, providing branding, protection, or additional information.

Staple: A thin, U-shaped metal fastener used to secure or join packaging materials, such as cardboard, paper, or plastic bags.

Stick: A narrow and elongated component often made of plastic used for packaging products such as lip balm, deodorant, or solid perfumes.

Sticker: A self-adhesive label (see Label).

Strap: A flexible and often adjustable band or strip made of plastic or fabric used for bundling or securing multiple items together.

Tab: A small, often folded or protruding component used for gripping, pulling, or opening packaging, such as pull-tabs on cans or tear-off tabs on envelopes.

Tag: A small, piece of paper, cardboard, or plastic attached to a product or packaging, providing additional information, pricing, or branding.

Tape: A narrow strip of adhesive material often made of plastic or paper used for sealing, bundling, or reinforcing packaging components.

Tie: A flexible strip or cord used for fastening, bundling, or securing items together, such as twist ties or zip ties.

Tissue: A thin and lightweight paper material often used for wrapping, cushioning, or protecting delicate or fragile items.

Tray: A flat or shallow container often made of plastic, paperboard, or foam used for holding and displaying products, particularly in the food industry.

Tub: A container, typically made of plastic, with a cylindrical or rectangular shape, used for holding and packaging various products, such as creams, lotions, or food items. Sometimes referred to as "Pot".

Tube: A cylindrical, often squeezable container made of plastic or metal, used for packaging and dispensing products, such as toothpaste, ointments, or adhesives.

Window: An opening or transparent panel often made of plastic or glass incorporated into packaging to provide visibility of the product inside.

Wire: A thin and flexible metallic component used for fastening, securing, or forming structural components in packaging or for creating closures, such as twist ties or wire seals.

Wrapper: A thin and flexible material, often paper or plastic, used for wrapping or covering products to provide protection, containment, or branding.