

# ENVIRONMENT MINISTRY NOTIFIES GUIDELINES ON EPR FOR PLASTIC PACKAGING

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Environmental Pollution - Air, Water, Soil & E-waste

Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav. File

Taking forward the clarion call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to eliminate single-use plastics, the Environment Ministry has notified comprehensive guidelines on Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for plastic packaging, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said on Thursday.

Announcing the notification of the new Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2022 through social media late on Thursday night, Mr. Yadav said the guidelines provide a framework to strengthen the circular economy of plastic packaging waste and promote alternatives to plastic.

“Taking forward the clarion call given by PM Shri @narendramodi ji to eliminate single-use plastics, @moefcc has notified comprehensive Guidelines on Extended Producers Responsibility on plastic packaging,” Mr. Yadav tweeted.

“The guidelines not only provide a framework to strengthen the circular economy of plastic packaging waste, but also promote development of new alternatives to plastics. They provide a roadmap for businesses to move towards sustainable plastic packaging,” Mr. Yadav said in the tweet.

According to the notification, the new guidelines shall come into force with immediate effect.

The new rules classify plastics into four categories- category 1 will include rigid plastic packaging; category 2 will include flexible plastic packaging of single layer or multilayer (more than one layer with different types of plastic), plastic sheets and covers made of plastic sheet, carry bags, plastic sachet or pouches.

Multi-layered plastic packaging (at least one layer of plastic and at least one layer of material other than plastic) will come under category 3 and plastic sheet or like used for packaging as well as carry bags made of compostable plastics fall under category 4.

With respect to plastic packaging, the EPR covers reuse, recycling, use of recycled plastic content and end of life disposal by producers, importers and brand-owners.

According to the new rules, the producers, importers and brand-owners shall have to provide the details of recycling certificates only from registered recyclers along with the details of quantity sent for end-of-life disposal, by June 30 of next financial year while filing annual returns on the online portal.

“The details provided by producers, importers and brand-owners and registered plastic waste processors will be cross-checked by the online portal,” it said.

“In case of difference, the lower figure would be considered towards fulfilment of EPR obligation of producers, importers and brand-owners. The certificates shall be subject to verification by Central Pollution Control Board or State Pollution Control Board or Pollution Control Committee,

as the case may be,” it said.

The government has also called for establishing of a centralised online portal by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for the registration as well as filing of annual returns by producers, importers and brand-owners, plastic waste processors of plastic packaging waste by March 31.

“The online system developed by CPCB for the registration as well as for filing of returns by producers, importers and brand-owners shall reflect the plastic packaging material introduced in the market by them in a financial year. It shall also reflect the details regarding the audit of the producers, importers and brand-owners as well as recyclers or other waste processors of plastic packaging waste,” it said.

The centralised portal would act as the single point data repository with respect to orders and guidelines related to implementation of EPR for plastic packaging under Plastic Waste Management Rule, 2016.

Environmental compensation shall be levied based upon polluter pays principle, with respect to non-fulfilment of EPR targets by producers, importers and brand owners, for the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing, controlling and abating environment pollution, the new rules said.

“Payment of environmental compensation shall not absolve the producers, importers and brand owners of the obligations set out in these guidelines. The unfulfilled EPR obligations for a particular year will be carried forward to the next year for a period of three years,” it said.

As per the new notification, the government has announced setting up of a committee which shall be constituted by the CPCB under chairpersonship of CPCB chairman, to recommend measures to the environment ministry for effective implementation of EPR, including amendments to Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) guidelines.

“The committee shall monitor the implementations of EPR and also take such measures as required for removal of difficulties. The committee shall also be tasked with the guiding and supervision of the online portal, including approval of requisite forms or pro forma,” it said.

The committee shall comprise of representative from concerned ministries/departments such as Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Department of Chemical and Petrochemicals; Bureau of Indian Standards, three State Pollution Control Boards or Pollution Control Committees, Central Institute of Plastic Engineering and Technology (CIPET), National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI), and three industry associations, and any other invitee as decided by the chairperson of the committee.

Under the new guidelines, SPCBs or PCCs shall submit annual report on EPR portal with respect to its fulfilment by producers, importers and brand-owners (which include manufacturers of plastic packaging material) and plastic waste processors in the state/Union Territory to the CPCB.

“The report shall also be submitted to the state-level monitoring committee constituted under the Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016. The SPCB or PCC shall also submit an annual report with respect to recyclers or end of life disposal in the state or UT to the CPCB by July 31 of next year,” it said.

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