

March 1, 2024

Guidelines for Safe Handling of Reusable Cups & Food Containers

Requirement to Accept Reusable Beverage Cups

[Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 702, Single-Use and Takeaway Items](#) (the SUTI Bylaw), takes effect March 1, 2024. The SUTI Bylaw requires retail business establishment operators to accept the use of a reusable beverage cup by a customer to hold a beverage purchased or obtained at the retail business establishment. If a customer's reusable beverage cup does not meet the requirements set out in the SUTI Bylaw, a retail business establishment operator is not required to accept the reusable beverage cup.

Food Safety Guidelines for Accepting Reusable Beverage Cups from Customers

Retail business establishments as "food premises operators" must also meet the requirements for reusable items set out in the [Food Premises Regulation under the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act](#), in addition to the requirements under the SUTI Bylaw.

All retail business establishment operators should develop procedures for serving hot and/or cold beverages in reusable beverage cups provided by customers. The procedures must meet the requirements in the SUTI Bylaw and the Food Premises Regulation. These procedures should address the following areas:

1. Reusable beverage cup requirements

- All reusable beverage cups must be:
 - Of sound construction (e.g. strong, sturdy, well made);
 - Visually clean;
 - In good repair;
 - Capable of being washed or disinfected; and
 - Suitable for its intended purpose.
- A retail business establishment operator must refuse to accept a customer's reusable beverage cup if any one of these requirements are not met.

2. Protecting other foods and equipment from cross contamination

- If a beverage needs mixing or stirring, a utensil that is clean and sanitized (in accordance with the Food Premises Regulation) must be used every time.
- A retail business establishment operator can choose to use an in-house vessel for sizing or to prepare drinks before transferring to the customer's reusable beverage cup.
- Dispensing containers should not come in contact with the reusable beverage cup.

3. Hand hygiene

- Food handlers must wash hands as often as necessary to prevent the contamination of food or food areas (Food Premises Regulation).
- For reusable beverage cups provided by customers, it is strongly recommended that food handlers wash their hands or change gloves before and after handling a customer's reusable beverage cup.

Food Safety Guidelines for Accepting Reusable Food Containers from Customers

Under the SUTI Bylaw, retail business establishment operators are not currently required to accept reusable food containers from customers to hold food purchased or obtained at a retail business establishment. A retail business establishment can decide whether or not to accept reusable food containers from customers.

If a retail business establishment decides to accept reusable food containers from customers, as a "food premises operator," they must meet the requirements for reusable items set out in the [Food Premises Regulation under the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act](#). They should also develop procedures for serving food in reusable food containers provided by their customers that meet the requirements under the Food Premises Regulation.

Visit toronto.ca/single-use for more information.

Relevant Definitions

Retail Business Establishment: A premise, location, or operation where goods and/or services are offered for sale, such as stores, online businesses, eating or drinking establishments, convenience stores, grocery stores, delicatessens, caterers, mobile food vendors, street vendors, vending machines, book stores, and clothing stores.

Retail Business Establishment Operator: A person who owns, manages, supervises, runs, or controls a retail business establishment and includes a person who owns the premises where the retail business establishment is operated.

Beverage Cup: A cup designed to serve hot and/or cold beverages.

Reusable Beverage Cup: A beverage cup designed to be used more than once, made from durable material, and capable of being washed or disinfected.

Disclaimer

This general guidance document has been developed by Toronto Public Health in coordination with the City of Toronto's Solid Waste Management Services Division for information purposes only. It is not intended to provide legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. The City of Toronto assumes no liability for accuracy or completeness. Retail business establishment operators are responsible for ensuring compliance with Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 702, Single-Use and Takeaway Items, and the Food Premises Regulation under the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act.