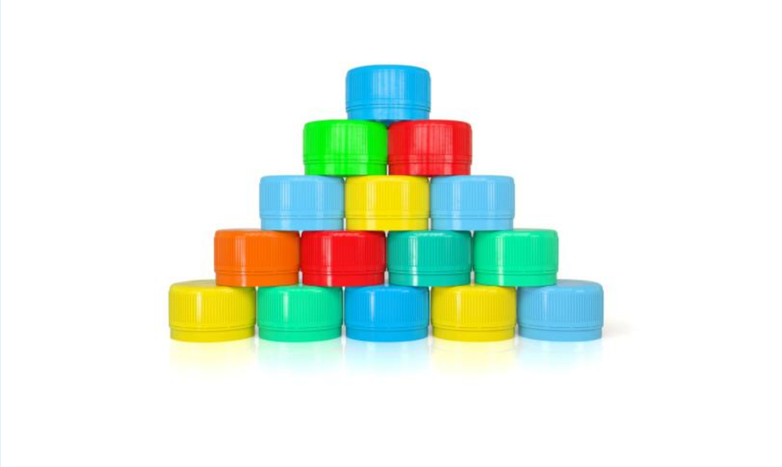
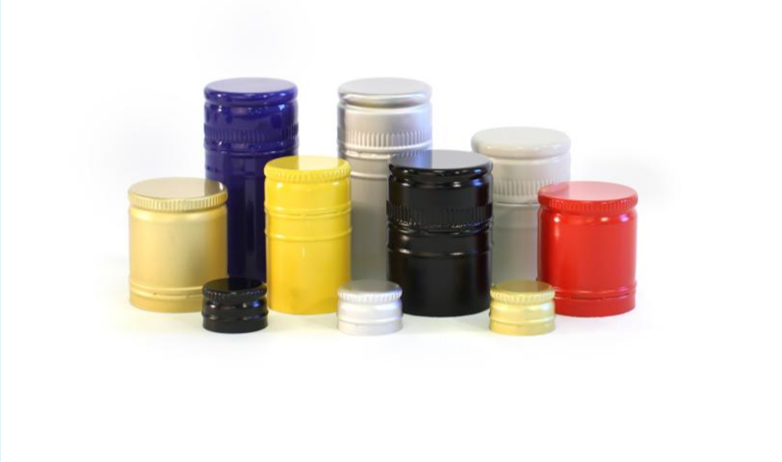
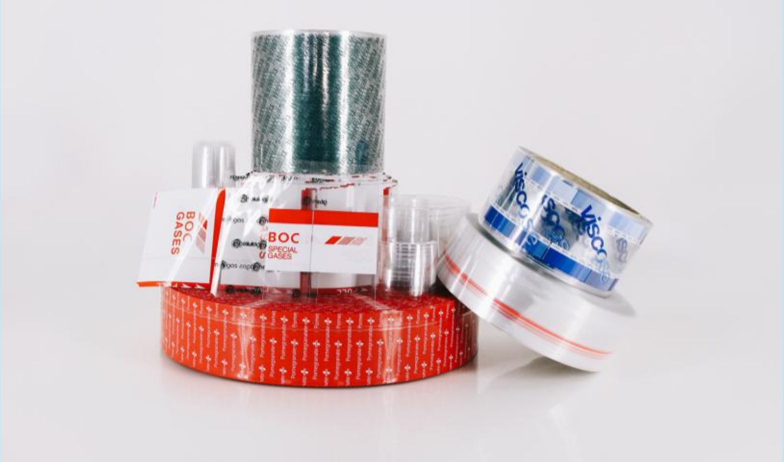
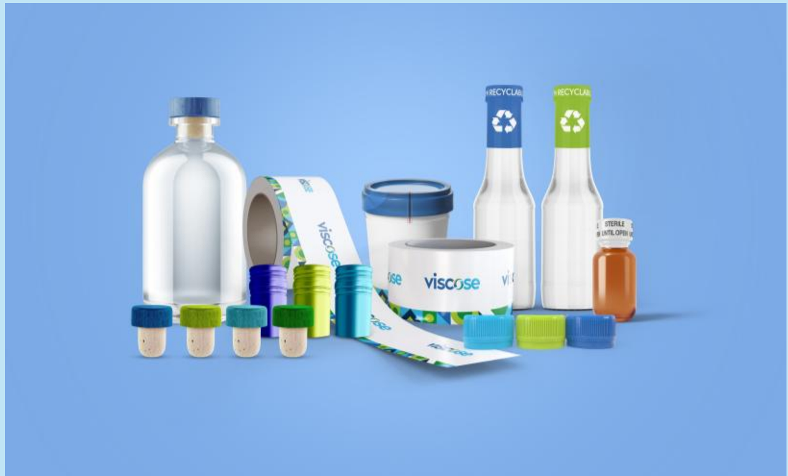
Understanding the new RAM guidelines & what it means for your packaging









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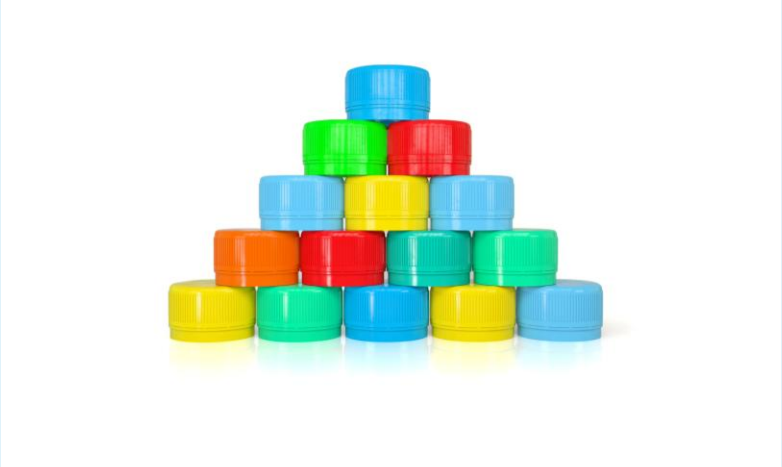

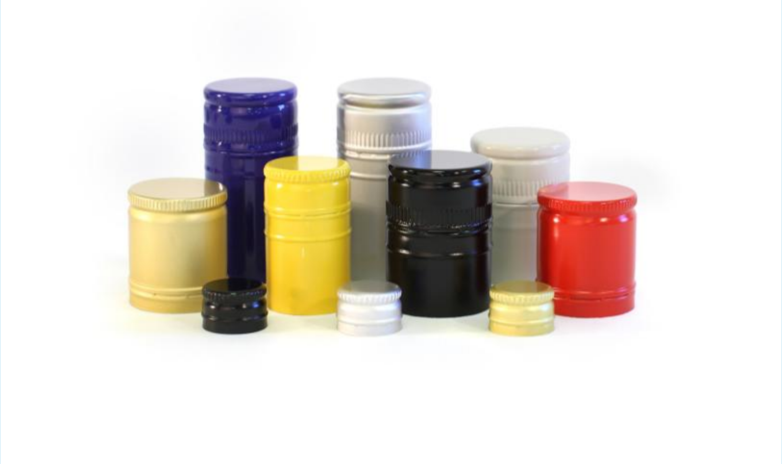
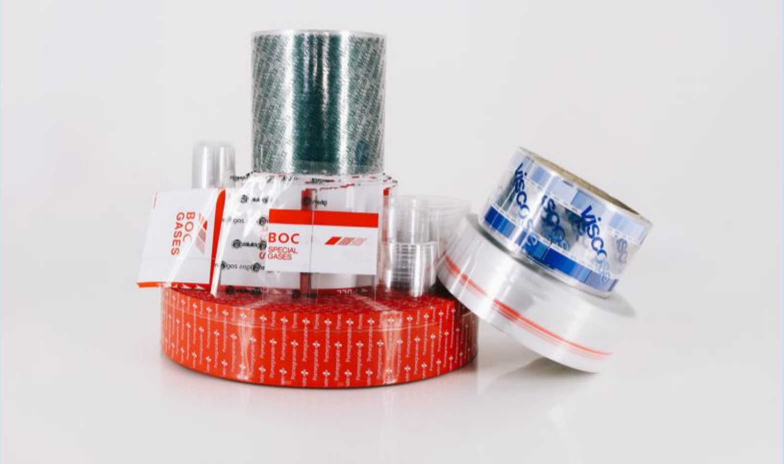

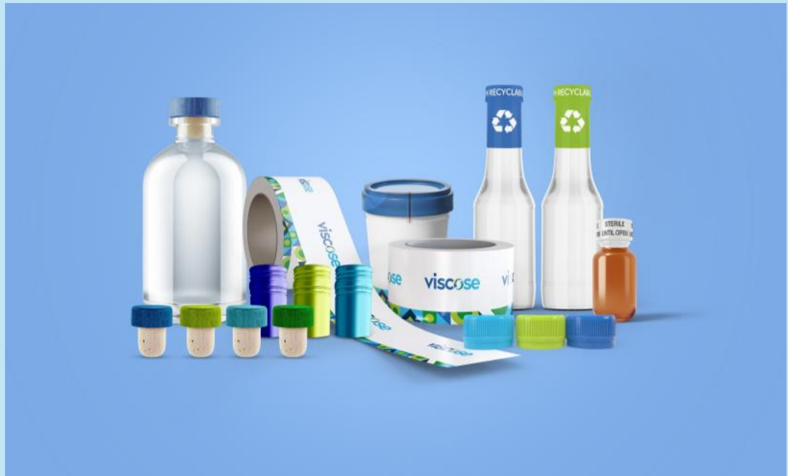

What is EPR?

- EPR is a new UK environmental policy that makes producers responsible for the entire lifecycle of their products – including the cost of waste management. EPR promotes more sustainable waste management products and practices based on the reduce, reuse, recycle model. Under this policy, producers are responsible for making and selling products, but also for ensuring their sustainable disposal after use.
- Producers who import or supply packaging within the UK, are now responsible for the costs of collecting, managing, and recycling the packaging that they place on the market. The goal of EPR is to incentivise business to create more sustainable product design and waste management practices.

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What is Recyclability Assessment Methodology (RAM)?

- To submit data under EPR, producers will need to use RAM to classify the material used in their packaging. Fees for EPR are based on how recyclable the packaging is and what material it is made from.
- RAM is the framework that assesses the recyclability of household packaging against four key criteria: collection, sortation, reprocessing, and end-use application.
- Under RAM, all ‘household’ packaging components are in scope. This covers primary and shipment packaging, such as street-binned waste, and glass drinks containers used in households.
- To comply with RAM, producers will have to use a RAG rating (Red, Amber, Green) for their materials based on governmental guidelines and then evaluate their materials against those specified in the RAM standards.

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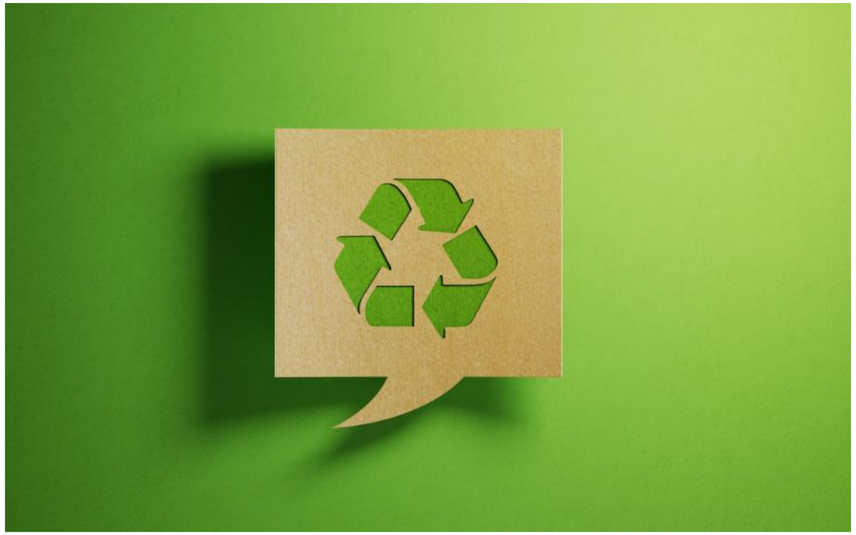

RAM as part of EPR reporting

- Under EPR, large producers must report packaging data twice a year — for January to June, and for July to December. They must assess all household packaging and report the material 'RAG' ratings by weight.
- This covers all household primary and shipment packaging, including street-binned packaging, and glass household drinks containers that are not included in an operational Deposit Return Scheme (DRS).
- The reported 'RAG' ratings will not affect your Recycling Obligations fulfilled through PRNs/PERNs, but they will influence the Local Authority Waste Management Fees charged by PackUK from the 2026 compliance year onwards.

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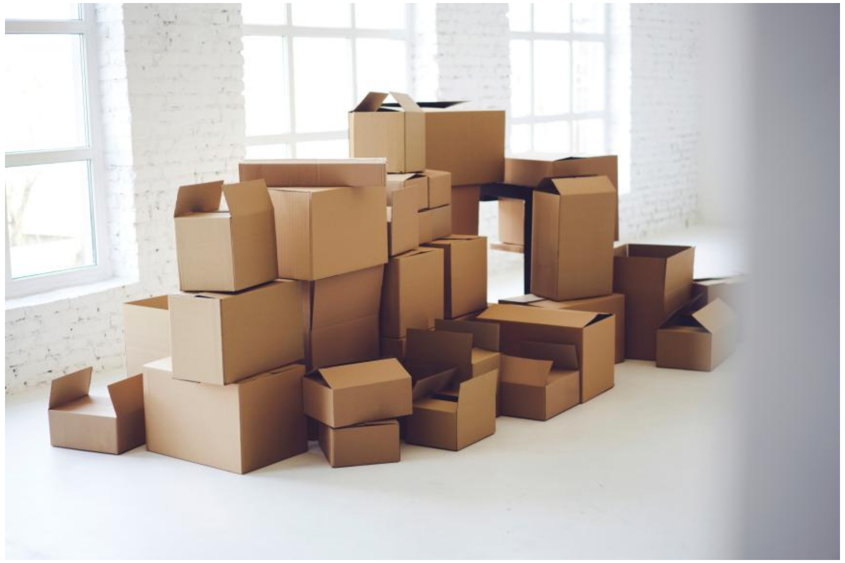

RAM Assessment planner

1. **Classification**- Determines the material composition and the separability of each component.
2. **Collection**- Checks components against collection thresholds.
3. **Sortation**- Ensures packaging materials can be sorted by industry methods.
4. **Reprocessing**- Verify that the material can be reprocessed without hindering recycling processes.
5. **Application**- Determine if reprocessed materials can be incorporated into new products, contributing to a circular economy.
6. **‘RAG’ Rating Assigned**- After the assessment, assign each packaging component a Red, Amber, or Green (RAG) rating to establish the Local Authority Waste Management Fees for the compliance year.

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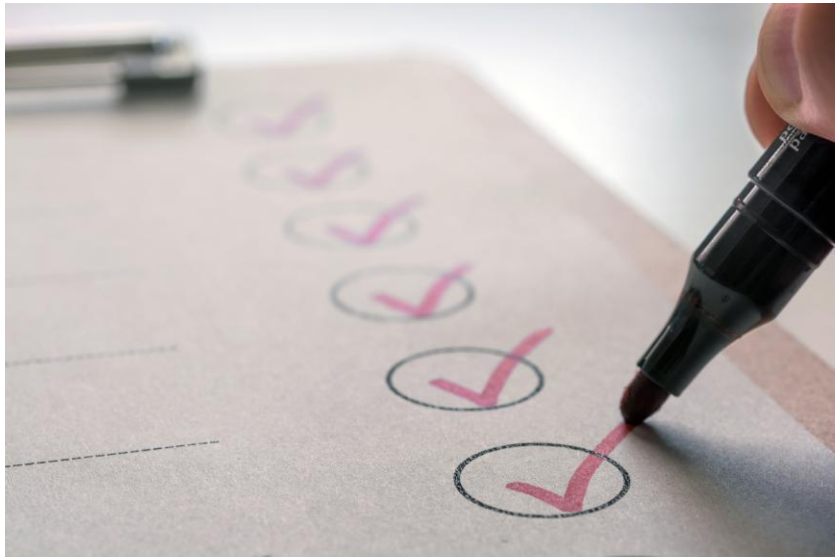

Local Authority Waste Management Fee Obligations

- Producers supplying or importing household packaging are required to pay Local Authority Waste Management Fees in addition to Recycling Obligation PRN/PERN costs. This applies to relevant primary, shipment, street-binned, and glass household drinks containers that fall outside the scope of an operational Deposit Return Scheme (DRS).
- Fees are calculated by weight and material using your reported ‘household’ Placed on Market (POM) data. From 2026, they will be modulated according to your packaging’s RAM RAG rating.
- Fees will be invoiced by PackUK, the Government’s EPR Scheme Administrator, to fund local authority local authority collection costs.

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Impact on Local Authority Management Fees

2025 RAM classifications will determine the LA Waste Management Fees for 2026. Green ratings are likely to have lower fees, and Red ratings the highest. The example below is based on PackUK guidance and may change in the final policy:

For 2026, assign Red-rated materials a Local Authority Waste Management Fee of 1.2 times the base fee. Future projections indicate increases to 1.6 times in 2027 and 2 times in 2028.

Amber ratings correspond to the base Local Authority Waste Management Fee.

As Red-rated fees increase, Green-rated materials will incur lower Local Authority Waste Management Fees, rewarding the use of more recyclable packaging.

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Where to start with your RAM Assessments?

Begin by identifying all household packaging materials that you supply or import.
Next, look for the material under the RAM RAG classifications

Material types and how they are rated under the RAM RAG guidelines:

Material	RAG rating- starting point
Paper & Cardboard	Green
Glass	Green
Aluminium	Green
Flexible Plastics	Red
Rigid Plastics	Green
Wood	Red
Fibre Based Composite - For Liquids	Amber
Fibre Based Composite - For Non-Liquids	Green
Other	Red

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Where to start with your RAM Assessments?

Review each material's starting point and identify quick wins.
For example, paper and board typically start with a Green RAG rating because they are widely collected by local authorities. Only paper and card with features that hinder recycling—such as metallic finishes or embedded non-paper materials—will be rated Amber or Red. Most plain cardboard boxes remain Green. If all your boxes come from the same supplier, you can assess them collectively in the same way.
Materials starting at Red may not be worth assessing unless you are confident, they can achieve a better RAG outcome. For instance, this could be the case if the material is widely collected in a recycling scheme accessible to at least 75% of the UK population.

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Where to start with your RAM Assessments?

Identify the packaging items you supply or import in the greatest quantities.
For example, if cardboard boxes make up most of your packaging and they are similar in nature—such as all being plain boxes from the same supplier—you can start by assessing these first. Since they are likely to be rated Green, gather the necessary evidence and maintain an audit trail to support this rating.

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Where to start with your RAM Assessments?

Assess whether you supply or import high volumes of Amber or Red packaging.
If a material initially falls into the Red or Amber category, gather information from your supplier to determine whether it can be reclassified into a lower-fee rating.
For example, flexible plastics typically start as Red. However, many UK supermarkets now provide collection schemes for flexible plastics, accessible to over 75% of the population. If your flexible plastic is included in one of these schemes, and you have evidence that it has been collected through this route, you may report it as Amber; otherwise, it remains Red.

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GOV.UK Guidance & Sources on EPR & RAM

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/extended-producer-responsibility-for-packaging-who-is-affected-and-what-to-do

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-collect-your-packaging-data-for-extended-producer-responsibility

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/recycling-assessment-methodology-how-to-assess-your-packaging-waste

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/recycling-assessment-methodology-materials-and-outputs/recycling-assessment-methodology-assessing-materials

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