



## GUIDELINES

# Bring Your Own Container (BYOC) Recognition for Economic Operators

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## 1. Operations Guidelines

### 1.1 Containers Consideration

#### A. Materials

- Acceptable materials include plastic, glass, and metal containers. Containers should be durable, clean, and in good condition. Containers being used for foodstuff should be food grade as stipulated by EC 1935/2006, regarding Foodstuff.

#### B. Size

- Containers should have a suitable size for the intended product to avoid spillage or overfilling.
- Large containers may be subject to staff approval to ensure they can be safely accommodated.
- If the container looks too small, explain that you will be serving him/her less quantity due to the small size of the container. If he/she is agreeable, proceed to accept.
- It is recommended to display the standard serving size measurements on your menus or at point-of-sale.

#### C. Hygiene Standards

- Highlight the significance of upholding elevated hygiene standards for both staff and customers.
- Offer instructions on appropriate cleaning techniques for various types of containers.
- Verbally verify with the customer that their container is sanitary for use.
- Proceed to accept the container upon the customer's agreement.



- Establish a transparent procedure for visually examining containers to verify their compliance with cleanliness standards. Do not accept containers with cracks or chips, stains, strong odours, warped or misshapen, corrosion, non-food-grade materials, visible mould or mildew.
- Hygiene Standards are crucial to mitigate potential food safety risks and ensure the integrity of your establishment.

#### **D. Tare Weights**

In line with the BYOC recognition process and its dedication to transparency and accountability, it is imperative that the BYOC recognised partner clearly communicate how tare weights and standard serving size measurements are integrated into pricing structures.

To uphold precision in tare weight and beverage standard serving size measurements deductions, it is recommended to implement robust measures at the checkout. These measures should guarantee the accurate deduction of tare weights and quantities dispensed, thereby promoting fairness and reliability in your pricing practices. This enhances the overall BYOC experience for customers, contributing to a sense of trust and encouraging responsible consumption practices.

#### **E. Pricing Structure**

In crafting the pricing structure for items when customers utilise their containers, prioritize fairness and transparency. It is essential that your pricing reflects the sustainable practices inherent in the BYOC initiative and it's clearly visible to the consumer. Clearly communicate any adjustments made for the use of customer containers.

#### **F. Financial Incentive**

Any business entity operating in the Catering Undertaking and/or Retail sector, whether presently implementing or considering the introduction of a BYOC (Bring Your Own Container) initiative within their operational framework. Under the BYOC program, registered economic operators are encouraged to accept reusable containers from customers in exchange for a financial incentive at the time of purchase. A non-exhaustive list of potential financial incentives as outlined:

- Discounts.
- Loyalty programs.
- Additional content.
- Etc.

## 2. Containers Inspection Procedure

BYOC recognised partners shall follow the minimum requirements, subject to local health and safety adherence to Maltese law.

### A. Attention When Filling

- Before filling, carry out a visual inspection for physical cleanliness, with no foreign extraneous matter visible. Lids are to be removed by the customer before filling. In the case of visible contamination, acceptance must be refused, or new, uncontaminated reusable containers must be provided for takeaway. Only suitable food-grade containers with smooth, easy-to-clean surfaces may be used.

### B. Always Separate Areas

- To prevent customers' reusable containers from entering the immediate hygiene area (area where perishable food is processed or stored), always use a separate counter area.

### C. Use a Hygiene Tray

- Customers place their reusable container on a 'hygiene tray' intended specifically for this purpose. The reusable container is then filled on the tray.

### D. Avoid Contact

- Prevent direct contact with machine parts as well as other storage locations.
- Take appropriate measures to prevent cross-contamination from utensils used to serve Foodstuff meeting customer containers.
- Use decanting vessels and/or cup holders and serving utensils.
- Filling may only be carried out by trained personnel, where food handlers must have a Category B food handling document.

### E. Clean and Disinfect Regularly

- Clean or disinfect areas where containers are filled, coffee machines, other equipment, or self-service bar at regular intervals (cleaning and disinfection plan) and as required.

### F. Wash Hands

- Maintain personal hygiene. Washing hands is mandatory after filling customer-supplied reusable containers and after handling payments.

- Gloves must be changed if worn while refilling customers' containers, they should be replaced especially after handling payments.

#### **G. Displays Help**

- Inform customers in the sales area that only clean food grade and empty reusable containers that have a smooth, intact, and clean surface may be filled.
- Do not accept containers with cracks or chips, stains, strong odours, warped or misshapen, corrosion, non-food-grade materials, visible mould, or mildew.

#### **H. Train the Staff**

- Regular staff training on this subject is required, along with documentation of work processes pertaining to cleaning and disinfection as and when required, including cleaning and disinfection plans.

#### **I. Multilingual Standard Operating Procedure**

- All the above-mentioned points should be stipulated in a multilingual standard operating procedure readily available or conspicuously displayed on the serving counter.

## **2.1 Declining Customer's Container**

In support of the commitment to sustainability and maintaining high standards of food safety, it is essential that BYOC recognised partners abide by these guidelines when customers present containers for use:

#### **A. Container Evaluation**

- If a customer presents a container that you believe poses any physical contamination risk or is unsuitable for reuse, kindly decline to accept it.
- Unsuitable for reuse: Do not accept containers with cracks or chips, stains, strong odours, warped or misshapen, corrosion, non-food-grade materials, visible mould or mildew.

#### **B. Polite Explanation**

- Politely explain to the customer the reasons why their container is deemed unsuitable. This may include visible contamination (as explained in point A), lack of proper sealing, or other factors compromising food safety standards.

#### **C. Educate on Suitable Containers**



- Advise the customer on the types of containers that are acceptable. Emphasize the importance of containers designed for reuse, cleanliness, and those meeting safety standards.

#### **D. Encourage Future Participation**

- Encourage the customer to participate again in the future with a suitable container. Express appreciation for their commitment to sustainability.

#### **DI. Reference Information**

- For comprehensive details on acceptable containers, refer the customer to the CE Malta website's [FAQs section on BYOC initiative page](#).

### **3. Staff Training**

BYOC recognised partners are required to conduct comprehensive staff training on the BYOC guidelines, with a specific emphasis on setting proper hygiene practices and ensuring strict compliance with relevant regulations. Additionally, it is essential for partners to consistently update their staff on any changes in guidelines or regulations to maintain ongoing adherence and awareness.

### **4. Legal Responsibility**

- Food business operators have a legal responsibility to ensure the safety of the food they produce and sell.
- If a customer falls ill due to overall hygiene issues within the business, possibly linked to accepting unclean or damaged reusable containers, the business could be held liable.
- Proper systems should be in place to manage the risks associated with accepting reusable containers.
- The food hygiene legislation (Regulation (EC) 852/2004), which applies to all food businesses, regulates the practice of accepting reusable containers and cups.
- The legislation covers hygiene aspects, including handwashing, personal hygiene, and the cleanliness of items in contact with food.
- Food business operators are responsible for the safety of the food they produce and sell, necessitating a risk assessment of accepting reusable containers as part of the food safety management system.