



South African Plastics Recycling Organisation

RECYCLING OF PLASTIC CRATES

Standard Operating Procedures

SAPRO members only

April 2019

Introduction

Solid waste management and recycling have become very important to the consumer, the legislators and larger corporate companies in recent years. Shopping centres, office blocks and housing estates are all getting involved in waste management in some form. The 2009 Waste Act forces waste generators to engage in *Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)* programmes to manage their end-of-life products. Plastics, and plastics packaging in particular, is contributing to the visible litter problem in South Africa. Plastics are recycled since the 70's in South Africa and plastics recycling is based on pure business principles, i.e. companies recycle to make money. With more focus on waste management and anti-litter campaigns, plastics recyclers are now getting more attention than ever before.

In 2010, 30 % of all plastics packaging used in this country, was recycled. Popular packaging for recycling includes PE-LD film and bags, PE-LD shrink-wrap, PE-LLD pallet wrap, PET bottles, PE-HD milk bottles, tubs and trays, caps and closures and PE-HD and PP crates, amongst others. Crates are very popular as recycled injection grade PE-HD is in demand by plastics convertors for the manufacturing of crates again.

Most of the crates in circulation belongs to someone.

Beverage crates are managed very well as they have a deposit value. Damaged and obsolete crates are recycled under some agreement by specific recyclers and the recycle is sold to crate manufactures for the manufacturing of beverage crates again.

The problem comes in with dairy and bread crates. According to the Gauteng Crate Enterprises, the milk industry estimated their crate losses at around R50m in 2009 in Gauteng alone. They also said that *"it seems that the recycling industry contribute the most*

to the losses due to theft. The milk and bread companies doesn't abandoned the crates or throw them away at any time".

Plastic crates are being recycled by plastics recyclers. Broken and damaged crates are bought together with other plastics from waste pickers, collectors and waste management companies. Plastic recyclers have been prosecuted in the past for crate theft. There were no guidelines for the recycling of crates in the past. SAPRO developed *Standard Operating Procedures* for the recycling of crates for its members. These were compiled after discussion with the South African Police Department¹ and reference to the Second Hand Goods Act (Act 6 of 2009).

Recyclers need to keep a register of all their potentially questionable incoming materials, e.g. crates, shopping trolleys, 240 litre waste bins, bumpers, etc. These include products that could be stolen for sale to a scrap dealer or in the case of plastics, to a recycler.

Procedures to follow

Plastics recyclers that recycle crates amongst other materials should follow the following steps.

1. Put a clear sign up somewhere that states that no stolen goods will be accepted.
2. Apply for a Second Hand Dealers certificate by completing a *Second Hand Dealers Application* form available from your local area police station; documents SAP 21 and form SAPS 343. (You will be required to give copies of your ID, business cards, a basic sketch plan of your premises, business's papers like a tax certificate, cc registration, VAT and PAYE certificates.)
3. The police will acknowledge receipt of you application and pay you a visit to ensure that all the information was provided. Once satisfied, they will issue a Second Hand Dealers Certificate which is valid for one calendar year.
4. Keep a *Register of Second-Hand Goods*, available from your local stationer or it can be computerised or any other book as long as it contains the necessary information. This includes:
 - a. Name of the goods
 - b. Description of the goods
 - c. Day and time purchased

¹ *Second-hand goods officer at the Germiston Police Station – Constable Baloyi – tel 084 358 0952*

- d. Name, ID and address of person from whom goods were acquired (An example was given by Constable Baloyi as “Joshua Malete, Zimbabwean born on 3 June 1970, living under the N3 bridge”) A photograph would be ideal. Regular suppliers (collectors) can be registered once and be issued with a code or number.
 - e. Date and time of disposal of the goods, i.e. granulated or sold
5. The goods must be kept in a specific location on the premises for 7 days before it can be disposed of.
 6. If the police gets a claim from the local dairy that the recycler stole his crates, the police will ask you to produce the register with the details of when and from whom it was obtained. They will then try to locate the seller and the recycler will be regarded as a legal owner of the goods.
 7. The Recycler/member will not be prosecuted for possession or buying of stolen goods, should they comply with the Second Hand Goods Act. The crates will however be confiscated (without compensation) by the South African Police Services and handed back to the legal owners.

The additional administration will assist the police to be up to date with the recycler’s activities and the police would be able to assist the recycler in case of a query. If the recyclers do not want to or cannot follow the procedures as explained in the *Second Hand Goods Act*, he should stay clear of crates or any other potentially contentious products.

Standard Operating Procedures

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) should be clearly displayed in the area where goods are received. The attached SOP is only an example and can be modified for the relevant products.



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1. No stolen goods to be accepted.
 2. All crates to be registered in the *Register of Second-Hand Goods*.
 3. Copy of the seller's ID will be made.
 4. Goods will be kept on the premises for 7 days.
 5. The seller takes full responsibility for the goods sold.

Second Hand Dealers Certificate number:

Valid till:

Name of responsible person:

Signature:
