

Refillable Reusables: Refilling Reusable Containers

[Chapter 246-215-03348 Washington Administrative Code](#)

Refillable reusables are industry provided take-home or consumer-owned containers which are returned or brought to the food service establishment (FSE) for refilling with food or beverages. Both types of reusable containers must be cleaned by the consumer before returning for refilling at an establishment.

Definitions

Industry provided take-home containers are FSE provided containers which are returned by the consumer for refilling for sale or service, such as a milk bottle.

Consumer-owned containers are the customer's own containers which are brought to the FSE for refilling, such as a reusable plastic or glass container or coffee cup.

Ready-to-eat (RTE) food means foods that are not going to be cooked or do not need to be re-cooked before being served such as cheese, sushi, and cooked meatloaf served as a cold sandwich.

Time/Temperature control for safety (TCS) food (formerly "potentially hazardous food" (PHF)) means a food that requires cold or hot holding, proper cooling, or time management to limit the growth of harmful bacteria or toxins. Dairy products, cooked meats, and cut leafy greens are examples of TCS foods.

Contamination-free process means:

- The lip-contact surface of the cup, glass or container cannot touch the dispenser.
- The beverage or food delivery tube/chute/opening must be protected from customer contact, such as being recessed.
- The beverage or food delivery tube/chute/opening must be designed to prevent condensation, dripping, or splashes from going into the reusable container.
- The beverage or food delivery tube/chute/opening must be designed with a self-closing door if the dispensing system is located outside or not under the full-time supervision of an employee to protect against dust, pests, and other contamination.



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Industry Provided Take-Home Containers	Consumer-Owned Containers
Provided by the FSE, intended for reuse (no single use/disposable containers) and easily cleanable.	Provided by the consumer, intended for reuse, easily cleanable and visibly clean.
Any food container that is washed, rinsed, and sanitized by the FSE may be refilled with food.	
<p>Food Containers (Approved plan <u>not</u> required.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inspected by employee to ensure container is in good condition. ○ Washed, rinsed, and sanitized at FSE prior to refilling for intended consumer or use of a new container. ○ Refilled by employee with any food. 	<p>Food and Beverage Containers (Approved plan <u>is</u> required.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Visibly clean and returned to the same consumer. ○ Refilled with non-RTE bulk foods (e.g., uncooked beans), non-RTE produce (e.g., whole unwashed lettuce), and packaged foods (e.g., wrapped candy) by employee or consumer. ○ Refilled with unpackaged RTE foods (e.g., granola) dispensed through a chute, gravity flow or other contamination-free process by employee or consumer. ○ Refilled with unpackaged, RTE foods (e.g., salad bars, deli counters, and bins with scoops) by an employee using a process without touching the lip or inside of the container with the FSEs utensils or equipment. ○ Refilled with TCS beverages by an employee with a contamination-free process other than a dispensing system.
<p>Beverage Containers (Approved plan <u>not</u> required.)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Non-TCS beverage refilled by employee or consumer with a contamination-free dispensing system or other process. ○ Container is returned to the same consumer or is washed, rinsed, and sanitized in the FSE. ○ Container can be rinsed with fresh, running hot water at the FSE. 	<p>Beverage Containers (Approved plan <u>not</u> required)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Refilled with TCS beverages by employee or consumer if contamination-free dispensing system is used. ○ Container is returned to the same consumer. ○ Container can be rinsed with fresh, running hot water at the FSE. ○ Container of any kind is refilled at water vending station.