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## **Guidelines for the Reuse of Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs)**

The Rigid Intermediate Bulk Container Association (RIBCA) is a business unit of the Industrial Packaging Alliance of North America (IPANA).

The Members of RIBCA that produce Composite – Intermediate Bulk Containers (IBCs) represent in excess of 90% of all such packages produced in North America and Mexico. They have established Guidelines to assist the purchasers and emptiers of IBCs in the correct reuse of the emptied containers.

A composite IBC consists of a large, generally 275 to 330-gallon capacity, polyethylene vessel that is supported by an outer frame generally of steel construction. The purchaser/filler supplies product to the user of the product, who becomes the emptier of the IBC. Due to the strong and durable construction of the IBC, it is ideally suited for continued, multi trip reuse. The IBC manufacturers in conjunction with a network of third party providers, whose specialty is the collection, cleaning, refurbishing and redelivery of the IBC to the filler, have established systems that simplify this process throughout North America and Mexico.

In order for these systems to function efficiently it is necessary that certain procedures be followed by the emptier and supported by the purchaser/filler. In these guidelines, we have divided the procedures into two (2) areas:

- 1) **An Empty IBC**. A clear definition of what empty means for use by the emptier prior to collection for cleaning.
- 2) **Serviceable Unit**. A list of defects that render the IBC unsuitable for continued reuse unless repaired.

## **EMPTY IBC**

Guideline Definition: The interior of the IBC shall be drip dry and free of any solid material.

By Law: If the product remaining is classified as dangerous goods, 40 CFR 261.7 shall apply as follows:

No more than 3.0 % by weight of the total capacity which is:

- 0.8-gallons in the case of a 275-gallon IBC
- 1.0-gallons in the case of a 330-gallon IBC

Note: If the product is a dangerous good and an amount in excess of 3.0 % by weight is inadvertently transported, the emptier will be notified that the IBC contains product and the emptier will arrange for the prompt return of the product to his facility.

By Law: If the emptied IBC had contained an Acutely Dangerous Material (P listed and poisonous by inhalation) 40 CFR 261.31 shall apply as follows:

The IBC must be triple rinsed, drip dry and certified to be in Compliance.

Failure to comply with these instructions can result in the IBC being returned to the emptier/shipper and return freight will be at the emptier's expense.

## SERVICEABLE UNIT

Under the RIBCA Guidelines any of the following defects shall render the IBC to be in non-serviceable condition and the IBC should not be returned by the emptier.

Cage	No rust or corrosion
Cage	No broken welds, rods or bolts
Pallet steel	No bent or damaged corners or feet
Pallet steel	All welds and bolts intact
Pallet wood	No missing or broken boards or feet
Bottle	No punctures, cuts or cracks
Bottle	No residue on the exterior or interior
Closures	No punctures or cracks and closed as for shipment
Valves	Operable and closed for shipment

In addition:

- There must be an MSDS sheet with each IBC, or on file at the cleaning facility
- All labels and marks required by the US department of Transportation (DOT) regulations must be in place
- All labels plates in place
- Quantity – there shall be a minimum of 8 units from the same manufacturer in each return shipment.

Note: A photographic record of each returned IBC that fails to meet the return requirements will be maintained by the cleaner for use in dispute resolution.

These guidelines may also be used for other IBC design types. The definition for an empty IBC applies to all design types. A serviceable unit is defined as one whose applicable components meet the criteria as outlined. In addition, certain design types may be required to meet additional criteria such as minimum wall thickness. Contact the IBC owner if you question the serviceability of the unit.