



HEALTH ▸ HYGIENE ▸ HOME

Reduce, Reuse, Replace, Recycle.

RB Statement on Plastics

The responsible use of plastic for packaging is our overriding aim and we have organised our efforts using the 4 R approach - reduce, reuse, replace, and recycle.

- We are committed to removing or reducing plastic packaging wherever possible and investing in research into alternative materials that can replace its use.
- Where we will continue to use plastic in packaging we will ensure that at least 25 per cent of its content is recycled plastic by 2025, where possible or allowed by regulators.
- By 2025, 100 per cent of our plastic packaging will also be recyclable or reusable, with best-in-class labeling to help consumers recycle effectively.
- We will work with peers and governments to enable products in our health portfolio to meet these targets without compromising their safety and efficacy for patients and consumers.



RB Plastics Packaging Position Statement

Plastic has proved itself one of the most versatile materials ever invented thanks to its light weight, flexibility, durability, resistance to moisture, and relative low-cost. As a result, it is widely used to provide safe packaging for our food, drink and medicines as well as many household products. But one of the unintended consequences of its widespread use is that it causes enormous environmental damage – from the Great Pacific Garbage Patch with its 1.8 trillion pieces of plastic to the millions of tons sent to landfill every year. It takes a long time for plastics to break down – or biodegrade – which is contributing to a mounting issue that has become a systemic, global problem.

RB has long been aware of the positive and negative aspects of plastic packaging. We have always seen plastic as a valuable resource to be used like any other – efficiently and effectively.

As a company, we try to reduce our packaging as much as possible, eliminating waste wherever we can through innovation. Since 2003 we have been working to make our trigger sprays more environmentally friendly, including the removal of all metal. This year we have gone further and adopted a smaller design for triggers which will cut plastic use by 570 tons a year. By the end of 2019, all but one of our triggers will be 100 per cent recyclable. Last year we achieved our target of sending zero waste to landfill from our factories. But we recognise we need to do more.

Responsible plastic use is not just about keeping it to the minimum and replacing its use where possible – it's about ensuring that we reuse and recycle as much as possible too. Plastic provides the best solution in terms of safety, cost and carbon footprint for many products but its post-sale life must be thoughtfully addressed. Where it can be replaced effectively, it should be.

Targeting Change

So while we have instituted targets to reduce our use of plastic packaging by our own brands – including Harpic, Finish, Scholl and Vanish - we have now set targets for further change. That means making:

100 per cent of our packaging recyclable or reusable, and including at least 25 per cent recycled plastic content in our packaging by 2025 where safety and regulations allow.

We will continue to find replacement materials where suitable, investing in research into new innovative packaging formats and technologies such as plastic replacement foaming technology, working closely with our supply chain.

Our teams are focusing on driving tangible transformation and innovation at an accelerated pace to radically change how we use plastic and deliver products to our consumers.

The medicines, self-care medical devices and food supplements sectors are highly regulated and the use of plastics in packaging and manufacturing is driven by the need to offer safe and effective products to patients and consumers. For instance, replacing medicine blister packs for over-the-counter medicines with a safe and affordable alternative is difficult and needs to go through stringent safety, stability regulatory and approval checks. We are currently reviewing the packaging of our entire health portfolio's product range to see how plastic use can be reduced and what the viable alternatives are.

For RB, peers in the industry, our retail partners, as well as the various regulatory bodies globally, patient safety is paramount. We are also collaborating closely with industry associations within the health space as well as our retail partners to address the required changes in regulatory and approval frameworks that will facilitate a reduction in plastics in this portion of our portfolio too.

The idea of creating a more 'circular or closed-looped economy' where the use of plastic is designed with the ease of recycling and reuse in mind, is central to responsible plastic use. While recycling facilities and services are widespread in some countries, they remain insufficient for the scale of the task. We are committed to improving this infrastructure and ensuring that not only is our packaging as recyclable as possible but that it is effectively sorted and collected. We will continue to share knowledge on how best to recycle and reuse packaging.

We are already working with leading campaigners How2Recycle in the US and have started collaborating with the internationally-recognized On Pack Recycling Label organisation in the UK to ensure our labels present clear instructions and guidelines.

Finding Solutions by Working Together

Alone, RB will never solve the global plastics challenge. The solution demands global co-ordination, with multi-lateral collaboration and joint ventures. This means working with third parties – be they not-for-profit organisations, governments, local authorities and communities, industry associations, waste management specialists, suppliers, retailers, consumers or our peers - and we will seek to forge effective relationships across all these groups.

While we are stepping up our efforts to play our part in the responsible use of plastics, many of these initiatives are not new to RB and are already well established; what is new is our commitment to transparency. It is important that all stakeholders understand that where we use plastic we strive to use it responsibly and encourage consumers to dispose of it with care. Responsibility is at the heart of our values; without it we will not deliver healthier lives and happier homes.



RB Taking Action

- Smaller Harpic caps save 150 tons of plastic a year.
- Smaller bottle triggers save 570 tons of plastic a year.
- Redesigned Velvet Smooth foot file packaging saves 72 tons of plastic.
- Smaller Lysol caps and lighter bottles save 245 tons of plastic a year.
- Redesigned Durex Play Lubricant packaging saves 150 tons of plastic year.
- Lighter Lizol Liquid bottles in India save 107 tons of plastic a year.
- Lighter Harpic bottles in India save 43.2 tons of plastic a year.
- Redesigned Finish ALL IN 1 packaging saves 140 tons of plastic a year.

