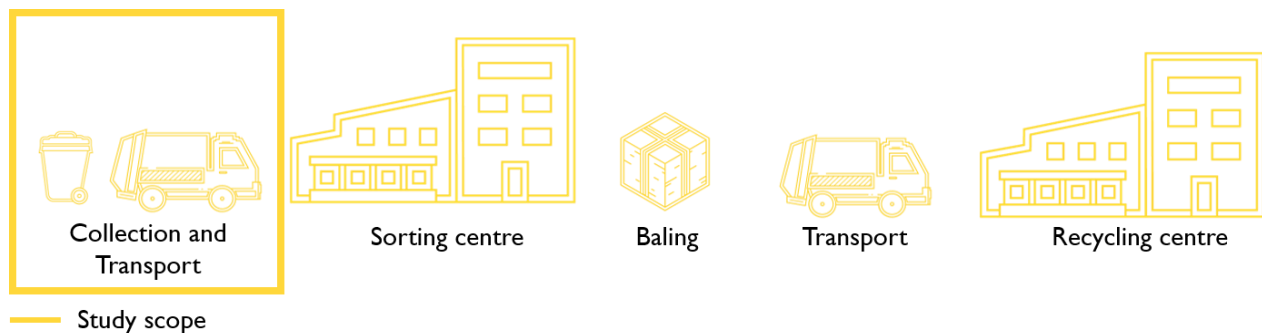


GENERAL NOTICE II

Impact of compaction on the separation of paper/cardboard sleeves from plastic pots

SUMMARY

This general notice aims to assess the effect of compaction on the separation of associated components in the case of plastic pots with cardboard sleeves, before they arrive at the sorting centre, during collection and transport in refuse collection vehicles fitted with an onboard compactor.



In sorting centres, plastic packaging (consisting of more than 50% plastic) is intended to be directed to the recycling stream corresponding to its plastic resin.

The presence of a cardboard sleeve associated with the plastic pot raises two issues:

- The cardboard sleeve may disrupt detection of the plastic during optical sorting and therefore the routing of the packaging to its recycling stream
- The cardboard sleeve can only be sorted into the paper/cardboard packaging recycling stream if it is separated from the plastic pot

COCET assessed the impact of collection and transport with compaction on the separation of these components.

During collection and transport with compaction, plastic pots and their cardboard sleeves are not systematically separated.

This notice pertains solely to the impact of collection and transport with compaction on the form of the packaging and provides no indication of this issue during sorting in a sorting centre or during recycling/regeneration in its designated stream.

I Context

Manufacturers have developed plastic pots fully covered by a paper/cardboard sleeve with no glue points, with the aims of:

- Reducing the amount of plastic by reducing the thickness of the pot,
- Removing printing inks from the plastic pot to facilitate recycling and material recovery

The packaging was designed by manufacturers to facilitate separation of the sleeve from the pot and thereby enable recycling. The two associated components (the plastic pot and the cardboard sleeve) must be separated to ensure proper detection by optical sorting machines. These machines emit an infrared beam which, when it encounters the packaging, identifies its constituent material so that it can be directed to its recycling stream.

If the cardboard sleeve is not separated from the pot, the resulting packaging will be sorted into the paper/cardboard packaging recycling stream and the plastic pot will not be recycled.

If the cardboard sleeve is separated from the pot, the two components can be directed to their respective recycling streams when they pass through the sorting centre.

The pot and sleeve may be separated:

- By the consumer manually separating the two components before placing them in the recycling bin
- During collection and transport by dump truck
- As the packaging passes through the different stages in the sorting centre

COCET wishes to assess whether a cardboard sleeve mechanically associated to a plastic pot (without glue) can be systematically separated during collection and transport by dump truck, without prior separation by the consumer.

An example of a sector using this type of packaging is the chilled dairy sector.

This notice concerns:

- Plastic pots with paper/cardboard sleeves mechanically associated to the pot (for example, by means of a notch, without glue points)

This notice does not concern:

- Plastic pots with paper/cardboard sleeves associated by a glue point
- Plastic pots with paper/cardboard sleeves featuring a closure system (clip-on lid, etc.)

2 Scope of the notice

This notice concerns the separation of associated components during **collection and transport with compaction, i.e. between collection and arrival at the sorting centre**. This stage may affect the form of the packaging on arrival at the sorting centre and determine whether the components are sorted into their respective recycling streams.

This notice does not assess:

- The ability of the packaging components to be separated by the consumer before collection
- The ability of the packaging components to be separated during the sorting process in a sorting centre
- The suitability of the packaging for recycling in its designated plastic stream

3 Tests performed

Tests were conducted in accordance with the COCET [Compaction Protocol](#) to understand the impact of collection and transport with compaction on the separation of associated components. The protocol involves placing 100 pots with sleeves in residents' recycling bins, followed by a visual count of pots with and without sleeves on arrival at the sorting centre, after collection and transport in a dump truck fitted with an onboard compactor.

Four types of PP pot with full cardboard sleeves mechanically associated without glue points were tested:

- Volumes ranging from 150 mL to 500 mL
- Height (sleeve and pot) ranging from 45 mm to 123 mm

For the various pots studied, the observed separation rates ranged from 2% to 36%, well below the 90% success threshold set in the COCET [Compaction Protocol](#). Collection and transport with compaction **do not systematically separate** paper/cardboard sleeves mechanically associated to plastic pots.

Assessment of the separation of pots and sleeves by compaction

Parameter studied	Separation rate	COCET assessment
Separation of the paper/cardboard sleeve associated with a plastic pot	Lower than 90%	Unacceptable

CONCLUSION

Given the current collection equipment available in France, collection and transport in a dump truck fitted with an onboard compactor **does not systematically separate paper/cardboard sleeves mechanically associated to plastic pots**. In the sorting centre, this failure to separate affects packaging sorting during the optical sorting stage because the machine cannot detect the packaging's majority material.

The lack of systematic separation of these components means that their independent routing to their respective recycling streams cannot be guaranteed. Under these conditions, separation of the paper/cardboard sleeve and plastic pot during collection in a dump truck is **unacceptable**; the sleeve therefore cannot be considered a component that is separable from the pot.

COCET may review this notice in light of developments in equipment, markets or sorting-standard requirements.