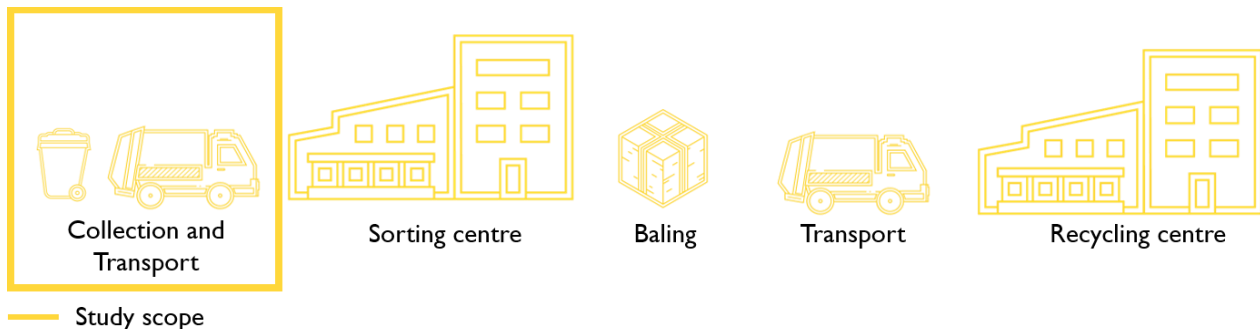


GENERAL NOTICE 12

Impact of compaction on the separation of clip-on lids from pots

SUMMARY

This general notice aims to assess the effect of compaction on the separation of associated components in the case of pots with clip-on plastic lids, before they arrive at the sorting centre, during collection and transport in dump trucks 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. Paper/cardboard packaging (consisting of more than 50% paper/cardboard) is intended to be directed to the non-laminated or laminated paper/cardboard recycling stream. Steel packaging (consisting of more than 50% steel) is intended to be directed to the ferrous metal stream.

The presence of a clip-on lid made from a different material from the main body raises two issues:

- It may disrupt the detection of packaging consisting mainly of plastic or paper/cardboard during optical sorting and therefore its routing to the appropriate recycling stream.
- For packaging consisting mainly of plastic, paper/cardboard or steel, their recyclability is limited if pots and clip-on lids remain associated. Systematic separation would enable them to be directed to their respective recycling streams, thereby optimising their recyclability.

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

During collection and transport with compaction, pots and their clip-on lids 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 use pots with clip-on plastic lids to package various types of products (chilled products, dry products, etc.). Where the pot and clip-on lid are made from different materials, one recyclability challenge is to ensure that these components arrive separately at the sorting centre so that each can be directed to the appropriate recycling stream.

COCET wishes to assess whether collection and transport by dump truck systematically separates the two associated components: the pot and the clip-on lid.

If systematic separation is confirmed, each packaging component can be considered to be routed separately by the sorting system in the sorting centre.

When the clip-on lid remains associated to the pot, two critical stages have been identified in the sorting centre:

- For steel pots:
These are separated during magnetic metal capture by the overband magnet. If the steel pot and its associated clip-on plastic lid are captured into the metal stream, the lid cannot be recycled in the steel recycling stream.
- For paper/cardboard and plastic pots:
These are separated by material by the optical sorting machine. The machine emits 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 pot and clip-on lid remain associated as they pass beneath the optical sorting machine, the packaging will be routed according to where the infrared beam strikes it (the pot or the clip-on lid). The association of the pot and clip-on lid therefore creates a significant risk that the majority material of the pot will be misidentified.

Sectors using this type of packaging include chilled dairy products, groceries and baby products.

This notice concerns:

- Plastic pots with a mechanically associated clip-on lid made from a plastic resin or a material different from that used for the pot
- Paper/cardboard pots with a mechanically associated clip-on lid made from a material other than paper/cardboard
- Steel pots with a mechanically associated clip-on lid made from a material other than steel

This notice does not concern:

- Pots with screw-on or glued lids
- Pots with mechanically associated lids using a system other than clipping (notches, tabs, 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 recycling 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.

Various pots with clip-on lids representative of the market were tested:

- PP pots with PET lids
- Paper/cardboard pots with PP plastic lids
- Steel pots with PP/PE plastic lids

The observed separation rates were:

- 16% to 43% for plastic pots
- 54% for paper/cardboard pots
- 48% to 66% for steel pots

These results show no significant difference in separation according to the material of either the pot or the lid.

The separation rates are well below the 90% success threshold set in the COCET [Compaction Protocol](#).

Assessment of the separation of pots and clip-on lids by compaction

Parameter studied	Separation rate	COCET assessment
Separation of pots and clip-on lids	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 pots and clip-on lids**. In the sorting centre, this failure to separate affects packaging sorting because the packaging will not always be correctly directed to the recycling stream appropriate for its 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 clip-on lids from their pots during collection in a dump truck **is unacceptable**; the clip-on lid 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.