AMC Toolkit: Refilling of Consumer-owned Containers

Washington State Department of Health

Except for situations listed in Section 3, retail food establishments may not refill consumer-owned containers without a written, approved plan as required in WAC 246-215-03348. Note: A separate plan is not required for dine-in customers to fill a personal container with their portioned meal from their individual meal service (such as a dinner entrée on their plate).

Section 1: Food Establishment Information

Establishment Name	**Phone** (xxx) xxx-xxxx

Street (Physical Address)	**City**	**ZIP**	**Email**

Contact Name	**Title / Position**

Section 2: Refilling Consumer-Owned Containers Requires Separate, Approved Plan

*Complete Section 4 for each option checked.

☐ **Option 1: Nonready-to-eat or packaged food***
- Nonready-to-eat bulk foods (such as dry rice, uncooked pasta, uncooked beans).
- Nonready-to-eat produce (such as whole, unwashed fruits and vegetables).
- Packaged or wrapped food (such as bagged salad mix).

☐ **Option 2: Ready-to-eat food in protective dispensers***
- Unpackaged, ready-to-eat foods (such as granola, honey, spices).
- Dispensed through a gravity flow or other chute-delivery system that protects the bulk food supply from accidental contamination.

☐ **Option 3: Ready-to-eat food in open containers***
- Unpackaged, ready-to-eat foods in open containers (such as deli counters, salad bars, bulk food bins with scoops).
- Only food workers may refill consumer-owned containers with ready-to-eat, unpackaged food not in dispensers.

Section 3: Refilling Must Follow Guidelines but Does Not Require Separate, Approved Plan

Check each additional process used in your facility.

☐ **Container for refilling by food processing plant**
- Collection unit and area for empty containers may not attract pests or cause a nuisance.

☐ **Container refilled at water vending station**
- Any consumer-owned container may be refilled by the consumer at a water vending station.

☐ **Consumer-owned beverage container**
- Container is only refilled with a drink for the owner.
- Container is designed to be easily cleaned.
- Container can be rinsed with fresh, running hot water at the food establishment.
- Container is refilled by an employee or the container's owner if using a dispensing system that prevents contamination, such as a fountain drink machine.

☐ **Container provided by the food establishment for refilling and washed by the food establishment**
- Containers must be designed for repeated use (not single-use/disposable).
- Containers must be washed, rinsed, and sanitized at the food establishment before refilling.
- Containers may be refilled with any food.

Section 4: Application Submission Checklist

✓	For establishments choosing to allow refill options listed in Section 2 above, the following must be submitted.
☐	**Consumer Education**: Food establishments must educate consumers on approved options for refilling. Ensure consumer education includes the types of containers they may refill, the need for containers to be cleaned, the types of foods that can be filled, how to notify a worker if risks are observed, and any other facility-specific requirements. **Provide copies of educational materials to be used, such as signage, stickers, or other printed material**.
☐	**Containers Allowed:** Indicate the types of containers that can be refilled. ☐ Single-use items. Inform customers if clean, single-use containers (such as reclosable zipper bags) may be used. ☐ Multi-use items. Plastic, stainless steel, or similar food containers that are designed to be washed repeatedly. ☐ Glass. Include clean up kit for broken glass and training for staff for food discard if glass is broken in the food area. ☐ Other: _____

To request this document in another format, call 1-800-515-0127. Deaf or hard of hearing customers, please call 711 (Washington Relay) or email civil.rights@doh.wa.gov.

	Section 4: Application submission checklist continued
☐ N/A ☐	**Option 1 – Control Measures**: Food establishments must ensure the following: ☐ Consumers or staff ensure container is visibly clean prior to refilling. ☐ Staff trained on allowable procedures and proper corrective actions if consumers contaminate the bulk supply of food (such as broken glass in area or inadvertent use of scoop to fill consumer container with ready-to-eat bulk food). ☐ Other: _____
☐ N/A ☐	**Option 2 – Additional Control Measures**: Food establishments must ensure the following: ☐ Consumers or staff ensure container is visibly clean prior to refilling. ☐ Dispensing containers used for ready-to-eat foods deter intentional or accidental contamination of the bulk food (provide copy of the dispensing equipment make/model/schematic with application). ☐ Food workers regularly sanitize (at least daily) frequently-touched surfaces where consumer-containers are filled. ☐ Staff trained on allowable procedures and proper corrective actions. ☐ Other: _____
☐ N/A ☐	**Option 3 – Advanced Control Measures**: Food establishments must use additional control measures to ensure the consumer's container does not contaminate a food contact surface or food preparation area: ☐ Staff ensure container is visibly clean prior to refilling. ☐ Required employee handwashing or change of gloves after direct contact with a consumer's container. ☐ Use of paper square or other disposable item to transfer food to consumer's container or otherwise prevent direct contact between the reusable utensil and the consumer's container. ☐ Sanitize countertops, scales, or other food contact surfaces immediately when consumer's container is removed. ☐ Staff trained on allowable procedures and proper corrective actions. ☐ Other: _____
☐	**Employee Training**: Employees must be trained before refilling consumer-owned containers under an approved plan. Submit materials or procedures used to train employees on the following: ☐ **Prevention of contamination**: Employees must be trained on the risk of germs that can spread from customer containers and how to prevent the spread to food preparation areas or food supplies. ☐ **Proper handwashing and good hygienic practices**: Employees must be trained on the increased handwashing frequency required if they will be handling consumer-owned containers. ☐ **Monitoring and corrective actions**: Employees must be trained on how to prevent contamination from refilling consumer-owned containers and how to correct food safety risks.
☐	**Examples of Records/Charts**: Provide any additional examples of records / logs that will be used to document food employees are following proper procedures and that corrective actions are completed.
**Section 5**: Employee Training
☐	How are employees trained? (Check all that apply.) ☐ Signs ☐ Read & sign document ☐ Hands-on demonstration ☐ Other:
☐	How often are employees trained? (Check all that apply.) ☐ Once ☐ Quarterly ☐ Twice per year ☐ Annually ☐ Other:
☐	Who will train staff on refilling reusable containers? (Check all that apply.) ☐ Owner ☐ Certified Food Protection Manager ☐ Person in Charge ☐ Other:
**Section 6**: Additional Facility-Specific Information
	Attach separate sheet if needed.
**Section 7**: Plan Maintenance
☐	Where is the plan kept in the food establishment?
☐	How often is the plan reviewed and updated? ☐ Annually ☐ Other:
**Section 8**: Signature
	Plan prepared by:
	(xxx) xxx-xxxx

Signature	Date	Printed Name	Phone