



## Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2022

**For Prelims:** Single Use Plastics and its uses, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), Paris Agreement, Net Zero, Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2022.

**For Mains:** Single use plastics and related concerns, Need for alternatives of Single use plastics, Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2022 and its significance.

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change** announced the **Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2022**, which notified the instructions on [Extended Producer Responsibility \(EPR\)](#) for plastic packaging.

- **Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016** has been amended to fast-track the elimination of [single-use plastics](#) and promote alternatives.
- The **term Extended Procedure Responsibility** means the responsibility of a producer for the environmentally sound management of the product until the end of its life.

### What are Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016?

- It mandates the **generators of plastic waste to take steps to minimize generation** of plastic waste, prevent littering of plastic waste, and ensure segregated storage of waste at source among other measures.
- The rules also **mandate the responsibilities of local bodies, gram panchayats, waste generators**, retailers and street vendors to manage plastic waste.

### What are the Provisions under the New Rules?

- **Classification of Plastics:**
  - **Category 1:** Rigid plastic packaging will be included under this category.
  - **Category 2:** Flexible plastic packaging of single layer or multilayer (more than one layer with different types of plastic), plastic sheets and covers made of plastic sheet, carry bags, plastic sachet or pouches will be included under this category.
  - **Category 3:** Multi-layered plastic packaging (at least one layer of plastic and at least one layer of material other than plastic) will be included under this category.
  - **Category 4:** Plastic sheet or like used for packaging as well as carry bags made of [compostable plastics](#) fall under this category.
- **Plastic Packaging:**
  - **Reuse of rigid plastic packaging** material has been **mandated in the guidelines** to reduce the use of fresh plastic material for packaging.
    - The **enforceable prescription of minimum level** of recycling of plastic

packaging waste collected under EPR along with use of recycled plastic content will further reduce plastic consumption and support recycling of plastic packaging waste.

- **Extended Producer Responsibility Certificates:**
  - In a significant first, the guidelines **allow for sale and purchase of surplus extended producer responsibility certificates.**
    - This will set-up a **market mechanism for plastic waste management.**
- **Centralised Online Portal:**
  - The government has also called for **establishing a centralised online portal** by [Central Pollution Control Board \(CPCB\)](#) for the registration as well as filing of annual returns by producers, importers and brand-owners, plastic waste processors of plastic packaging waste by 31st March, 2022.
    - It would act as the **single point data repository with respect to orders** and guidelines related to implementation of EPR for plastic packaging under **Plastic Waste Management Rule, 2016.**
- **Environmental Compensation:**
  - Environmental compensation will be levied based upon **polluter pays principle**, with respect to **non-fulfilment of EPR targets** by producers, importers and brand owners, for the purpose of **protecting and improving the quality of the environment** and preventing, controlling and abating **environment pollution.**
    - The **Polluter Pays Principle** imposes **liability on a person who pollutes the environment to compensate** for the damage caused and return the environment to its original state regardless of the intent.
- **Committee to Recommend Measures:**
  - A **committee constituted** by the **CPCB under the chairmanship of CPCB chairman** will recommend measures to the environment ministry for effective implementation of EPR, including amendments to **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) guidelines.**
- **Annual Report on EPR Portal:**
  - **State Pollution Control Board (SPCBs)** or [Pollution Control Committees \(PCCs\)](#) have been tasked to submit an **annual report on EPR portal** with respect to its fulfillment by producers, importers and brand-owners and plastic waste processors in the state/Union Territory to the CPCB.

## What is the Significance of the Guidelines?

- It will **promote development of new alternatives** to plastics and provide a roadmap for businesses to move towards sustainable plastic packaging.
- The guidelines provide a **framework to strengthen the [circular economy](#)** of plastic packaging waste.
  - A circular economy **depends on reuse, sharing, repair, refurbishment, remanufacturing and recycling of resources** to create a closed-loop system, minimising the use of resources, generation of waste, pollution and carbon emissions.
- These are important steps for **reducing pollution caused due to littered plastic waste** in the country.
  - India generates about **3.4 million tonnes of plastic waste annually.** The [United Nations Development Programme](#) aims to almost triple its plastic waste management to 100 cities in India by 2024.
  - Accumulation of plastic waste is **detrimental to the environment and when this waste finds its way into the sea**, there can be major harm to aquatic ecosystems, too.

## What are the other Initiatives taken to Curb Plastic Waste?

- [Swachh Bharat Mission](#)
- [India Plastics Pact](#)
- [Project REPLAN](#)
- [Un-Plastic Collective](#)
- [GoLitter Partnerships Project](#)

## Way Forward

- A blanket ban will not stop manufacturers from producing single-use plastic products.
- **Finding substitutes for use-and-throw plastic and ensuring alternative livelihoods** for producers, waste pickers and other groups involved in the business will go a long way in solving the problem.
- The government **should not only place fines for not adhering to the guidelines but incentivise producers** to switch to more sustainable products. Along with proper monitoring, promoting responsible consumerism is very important.
- Citizens also have to **bring behavioural change and contribute by not littering** and helping in waste segregation and waste management.

**Source: TH**

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