The voice of professional publishers

Magazine Plastic Wrapping Guidelines

(Revised August 2012)

UPDATED POSITION ON THE USE OF PLASTIC FILM

Plastic film is low cost, light weight, flexible, strong, water-proof, transparent, sealable and printable. These characteristics make it the best material for wrapping magazines for retail presentation and mailing. We must balance the advantages provided by plastic against the problems of disposal of such a durable and ubiquitous material. Magazine packaging has a short life. PPA members are using many thousands of tonnes of film and most currently goes to landfill, be it from unsold copies or as post-consumer waste.

The PPA's Environment committee continues to explore how publishers can reduce the environmental impact of plastic film. As an overall recommendation, members have been encouraged to reduce the thickness of their plastic film. The PPA Environment committee has also been working with WRAP (Waste Resources Action Programme) and the OPRL (On-Pack Recycling Label) scheme ***(www.oprl.org.uk)*** which is backed by the BRC (British Retail Consortium) and nearly 150 major retailers and brands. This recent work has resulted in amendments to previous recommendations.

REVISED GUIDELINES

The updated recommendations are determined by the two types of film predominantly used by magazine publishers:

POLYETHYLENE (PE)

This is the standard 'poly' used for carrier bags, mailing film and some retail magazine bagging. WRAP has worked with large retailers to develop the collection and recycling of this material. Recycling is always better than landfill, therefore the PPA recommends its members:

a) Encourage consumers to recycle their PE at retailer collection points. This is achieved by incorporating the appropriate OPRL label. Please note that local authority 'kerbside' collections are not ready for the recycling of PE and the OPRL label makes this clear. The label can be printed on the plastic film, carrier sheet or in the magazine itself. *(example of OPRL label noted in Annex 1)*
b) Don't use oxo-biodegradable material for PE as the rationale for degradation is landfill, not recycling. Degradable material is precluded from use in the OPRL scheme.
c) Full details about how to join the OPRL scheme are available at ***www.oprl.org.uk***. Please note that there is an introductory offer for PPA members - 18 months for the price of 12 months.

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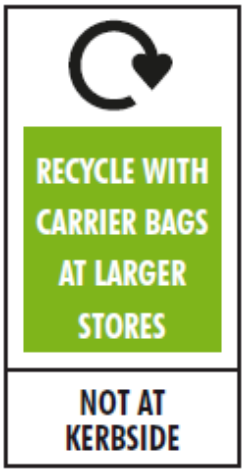
POLYPROPYLENE (PP)
This is the material used for the majority of retail magazine bags. Currently it is not recycled by retailers or local authorities. Therefore the PPA recommends its members:

a) Adopt the use of degradable PP film. Oxo-biodegradable film is the preferred technology as this helps the film to break down in the upper layers of landfill. Hydro-biodegradable film may be used as long as this is clearly labelled for home composting.
b) Encourage consumers not to contaminate the recycling waste stream with PP. This is achieved by incorporating the appropriate OPRL label *(as noted in Annex 2)*

ANNEX 1

New film label for PE



ANNEX 2

Use these labels on all other plastic films.

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