Washington State Post-Consumer Recycled Content Law)

As of May 2026.

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Washington's Post-Consumer Recycled Content (PCR) law, administered by the Department of Ecology, sets minimum recycled-content requirements for three categories of plastic packaging sold or distributed in or into the state: plastic beverage containers, plastic trash bags, and plastic household cleaning and personal care product containers. This sheet summarizes what applies to personal care producers.

8 oz threshold, in plain terms

Coverage is driven by the container, not the product. A personal care product is only covered when its plastic container has **a minimum capacity of 8 fluid ounces (or equivalent volume) and a maximum of 5 fluid gallons, with a neck or mouth narrower than the base, and maintains its shape when empty.**

Personal care products packaged in rigid plastic containers under 8 fl oz are **outside** the definition of covered product for this category. They are not subject to PCR minimums, registration, reporting, or fees under RCW 70A.245 for the personal care category.

Common points of confusion

Is it 2 fl oz or 8 fl oz? Both numbers appear in the same chapter of Washington law, but they apply to different categories. The **2 fl oz** threshold is the floor for **plastic beverage containers** under RCW 70A.245.010(1), which defines a beverage as 2 fl oz to 1 gallon. The **8 fl oz** threshold is the floor for **plastic household cleaning and personal care product containers** under RCW 70A.245.010(15)(a) and is restated in Ecology's November 2024 guidance. For personal care, use 8 fl oz.

Are OTC drug products just exempt, or are they out of scope entirely? Containers for FDA-regulated prescription and non-prescription drugs are **excluded from the definition of covered product** under RCW 70A.245.010(4)(b) and WAC 173-925. That means anti-dandruff shampoo, antiperspirants, anti-cavity toothpaste, medicated lip balm, UV sunscreen, and similar OTC drug products sit outside the law entirely. No exclusion request is needed.

Does the law apply if my container is over 8 fl oz but does not have a narrower neck? No. All of the container criteria must be met, including the requirement that the neck or mouth be narrower than the base. Wide-mouth containers without a narrower neck are not covered.

What counts as a covered personal care container

Under RCW 70A.245.010 and WAC 173-925, a plastic household cleaning and personal care product container must meet all of the following:

- Bottle, jug, or other rigid container with a neck or mouth narrower than the base. Jars, tubs, and tubes are included when the neck is narrower than the base.
- Minimum capacity of 8 fluid ounces (or equivalent volume).
- Maximum capacity of 5 fluid gallons (or equivalent volume).
- Capable of maintaining its shape when empty.
- Comprised solely of one or multiple plastic resins.
- Contains a household cleaning or personal care product.

Personal care products named in the statute and guidance

Ecology defines personal care products as those intended or marketed to be rubbed, poured, sprinkled, sprayed on, introduced into, or otherwise applied to the human body for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering appearance. Examples include:

- Shampoo, conditioner, styling sprays and gels, and other hair care products.
- Lotion, moisturizer, facial toner, and other skin care products.
- Liquid soap and other body care products (non-antibacterial).
- Deodorants (non-antibacterial), perfumes and fragrances, non-medicated lip balm, suntan lotion, body washes and shower gels, body scrubs and exfoliants.
- Cosmetic mouthwash and cosmetic toothpaste (non-medicated).
- Cosmetics where the container meets the covered-container criteria above.

What is excluded

The following are carved out of coverage for the personal care category:

- Containers for FDA-regulated non-prescription and prescription drugs. This pulls out antiperspirants, anti-dandruff shampoo, anti-cavity toothpaste, medicated lip balm, anti-bacterial soap, UV sunscreen, hair regrowth products, and similar OTC drug products.
- Dietary supplements, identified by a Supplement Facts panel (not a Nutrition Facts panel).
- Medical devices and medical products required to be sterile (21 C.F.R. Parts 200, 300, 800).
- Aerosols in plastic containers subject to 49 C.F.R. 178.33b.
- Refillable containers sufficiently durable for multiple rotations and intended to function in a system of reuse.
- Liners, caps, corks, closures, labels, and other items added externally or internally but separate from the structure of the container.
- Containers under 8 fl oz or over 5 fl gallons, and containers without a neck narrower than the base.

PCR minimum schedule

Personal care and household cleaning are treated as a single category. The PCR minimum began at 15% on January 1, 2025 and steps up over time:

Year	Personal Care and Household Cleaning	Plastic Beverage Containers	Plastic Trash Bags
2023	Not yet required	15%	10%
2025	**15%**	15%	15%
2026	15%	25%	15%
2027	15%	25%	20%
2028	**25%**	25%	20%

Year	Personal Care and Household Cleaning	Plastic Beverage Containers	Plastic Trash Bags
2031	**50%**	50%	20%

Key dates at a glance

Date	Obligation
January 1, 2025	15% PCR minimum in effect for personal care and household cleaning containers.
Jan 1 to April 1, 2026	First registration and reporting window for personal care and household cleaning producers. Covers 2025 data. Filed via the Waste Reduction Portal through Secure Access Washington (SAW).
April 1 annually	Recurring registration, reporting, and de minimis notification deadline.
September 1	Annual deadline to request a temporary exclusion for federally regulated products (applies to the following year).
January 31 annually	Ecology publishes its Workload Analysis setting the year's fee pool; public comment period follows.
June 1	Earliest date Ecology may assess penalties for failing to meet the prior year's PCR minimum.

Who is the producer

Producer status is determined at the covered-product level, in the following order:

- If the product is sold under the manufacturer's own brand or is unbranded, the producer is the manufacturer.
- If the product is manufactured by someone other than the brand owner, the producer is the brand licensee, unless the manufacturer or brand owner has agreed to accept responsibility.
- If no person in the categories above is subject to Washington jurisdiction, the producer is the importer or distributor into the state.

Fees

Ecology bills producers based on each producer's total plastic resin weight (virgin plus PCR) sold or brought into Washington for covered products. Two components apply:

- **Program Administration Fee:** all non-de-minimis producers of covered products.
- **PCR Oversight Fee:** producers submitting PCR reports for products required to meet minimum PCR in the prior calendar year.

The annual fee pool is set in Ecology's Workload Analysis, published each January for the coming state fiscal year (July 1 to June 30). Invoices are due within 30 days of issuance. Payment is accepted online via credit card or ACH/eCheck through EcoEPay, or by mailed check.

What counts as PCR

PCR may come from mechanical, advanced, or chemical recycling, provided the source is material discarded by an end user (household, commercial, or institutional). Post-industrial scrap, material reused in the same manufacturing process, and bio-resin do not count toward the minimum.