

HEMA waste policy

At HEMA we make products that are more practical, more beautiful and simply better. With consideration for people and the environment. Products that last and that our customers can keep enjoying. And when our customers no longer use the products, they can easily pass them on, return them, or dispose of them in a responsible way. As part of our ambition to operate in an increasingly circular way, we actively work to minimise waste streams, encourage reuse and optimise recycling. In doing so, we focus not only on the waste that arises within our own operations, but also on the waste that comes from packaging materials and from products that customers throw away at the end of their life.

Relation to other policies

In this policy we explain how we deal with our waste, our packaging and food waste. You can find more policies related to HEMA's environmental impact [here](#).

Waste processing

We work together with external waste processors to handle our waste streams as circularly as possible. Separating our waste is essential for this. Part of it goes back to our distribution centre, where it is collected per waste stream. The rest is collected directly from the stores. We always do this in line with what current legislation requires of us, or better. Below you can find an overview of the (most common) destination per waste stream.

Reuse	Recycling	Largely recycling	Mixed destination
Crates Pallets Displays	Paper and cardboard Plastic Clothing hangers Batteries Small electrical appliances Lamps Iron Deposit bottles Oil water sludge	Glass Processing with energy recovery (Frying) fat Swill (food residue) Expired products	Wood Confidential waste Hazardous waste Textiles

In addition, a stream of residual waste remains. We aim for less and less residual waste. The main levers in this are:

- Better separation of food residue (both food scraps and expired products);
- Preventing shrinkage in stores through good (inventory) planning and promotion;
- Better separation of unsold textiles.

In addition, our waste processors will improve recycling techniques over the coming years, allowing us to recycle a higher percentage of our waste.

Our objectives are:

- Reducing the kilograms of residual waste.
- Increasing the total share of operational waste that is reused or recycled to 80% by 2030.

It is important that we gain ever better insight into our waste streams and their destinations. On the basis of this, we will draw up additional policy to reduce residual waste and increase the recycling rate.

Smartly packaged

About 20% of all waste in the Netherlands consists of packaging. So when we talk about waste, we begin with the packaging.

At HEMA we love smart solutions, also when it comes to packaging. Because yes, packaging is sometimes needed: to protect products, keep them fresh or provide information. But we only want to package when it is truly necessary, and then as sustainably as possible.

We use different kinds of packaging:

- Consumer packaging: this goes home with the customer and then becomes waste. Sometimes we can counter this, for example by sorting clothing hangers ourselves as much as possible so that we can recycle them.
- Outer packaging: this protects products during transport to our stores and distribution centres. We collect all outer packaging from the stores and DC, and it mainly forms waste in our own operations; HEMA reports on this in the sustainability report.
- For transport itself we use reusable crates – nice and efficient.

Our specialists focus on the following strategies:

- Reducing packaging material.
- Using recycled or renewable materials.
- Promoting the recyclability and reusability of packaging.

Our objectives:

- 10% reduction in the total amount of packaging material by 2030 compared to 2025 across all purchased items.
- 75% of items will be on the shelf without plastic packaging (excl. food & beauty) by 2030.
- plastic packaging will be made from 35% recycled or bio-based plastic by 2030.
- all packaging will be recyclable by 2025 (and in 2030), including reusable packaging.
- all the paper and cardboard in our packaging will come from recycled or FSC-certified sources.

Food should not be thrown away

Yet worldwide about one-third of all food ends up in the bin. In the Netherlands alone we waste some two billion kilos of food every year. That is a shame. Not only of the food itself, but also of everything needed to produce it: water, energy, farmland. It causes unnecessary CO₂ emissions, loss of biodiversity and a waste of valuable raw materials. At HEMA we believe this has to change. Reducing food loss and food waste is therefore an important part of our waste policy, and so of our broader circularity strategy.

We make a distinction between food loss and food waste.

- Food loss happens early in the chain, during or just after harvest, in transport or storage. Think of peppers that don't meet the 'perfect' shape and therefore never make it to the store.
- Food waste happens later, often in the store or at people's homes. For example when products go past their date or are not sold.

We make the most impact by preventing food loss and waste. That is step one. If prevention isn't possible, we consciously choose which strategy to apply, in order of impact:

- Donating
- Processing into animal feed
- Digesting for biogas
- Composting
- And as a last resort: incineration or landfill

To counter food loss, HEMA's product developers work together with our vegetable and soup supplier on smart solutions. This is how soup made from rescued peppers or courgettes came about, for example. We aim to expand our collaboration with suppliers so that we gain better insight into food loss in our chain and can take joint action on it.

HEMA also actively works to reduce food waste through the 'Throwing away is a shame' programme. In hospitality and take-away, we plan meal preparation based on sales history. Products reaching the best-before date are marked down to encourage sale. When products are left at the end of the day, they are offered through Magic Boxes on Too Good To Go to keep waste as small as possible. We also work together with the food bank: at local level we donate HEMA products that are close to the best-before date, at national level our supplier donates surplus inventory. However, less food waste of course starts with improving inventory planning. We optimise our dashboard and therefore order ever smarter and only what is needed. We aim to have reduced our food waste by 50% by 2030 compared to 2023.

Recycling programmes

At HEMA we also take responsibility for our products after use. In our stores we collect various used products, such as lamps, small electrical appliances and batteries. This way we ensure that these materials are processed in a safe and circular manner, with harmful substances being removed and valuable raw materials being put to use again.

Customers can also hand in used textiles in exchange for 10% discount on a new item that lasts longer. Together with circular textile processor Wolkat, we make sure that usable items get a second life, and unusable clothing is turned into recycled products. To work towards an efficient sustainability transition of the textile sector, we also collaborate closely with the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Foundation for Textiles.

Transparency

Each year we map out our waste streams. This way we can monitor whether we are actually reducing our waste and reusing and recycling an ever-larger share of it. Are you worried about how HEMA handles waste? Then you can send your report to sustainability@hema.nl. Your report will be treated confidentially. More information on how we deal with complaints and reports can be found [here](#).