

Packing Guidelines

Hygiene:

- Importance of cleanliness in food preparation area
- No smoking, eating, drinking, touching face
- Mind coughing and sneezing
- No jewellery, strong perfume, long nails, outdoor clothing
- Cleaning cloths and sponges: Note some are for tubs and scoops, some for tables
- Towels: Note some are for hands, some for tubs and scoops
- Clean, food-safe surfaces: Top of scale, scoops, tubs, plastic bags
- Non food-safe surfaces: table tops, trolleys, outside of sacks/boxes, hands
- Before entering the packing room, put on full apron and hairnet/hat to cover all hair

Safety:

- Use correct lifting techniques
- Ask for help for heavy, large or awkwardly placed sacks/tubs

Entering the packing room and preparing to pack:

1. Wash hands
2. Check Packing List to see what is the next priority, or ask Packing Supervisor
3. Write out (e.g., on back of a misprinted bag label) name of product, bag size, weight and number to be packed (in order of priority), with your name
4. Find station and ensure that it is clean (under scales as well)
5. Collect equipment (dry if needed with appropriate towels)
 - A scoop (choose most efficient scoop to reflect pack size)
 - A bowl, bath or steel dish (depending on nature and quantity of product)
 - A stand (to support filled but unsealed bags)
 - A scale (if not already present)
 - A sealing machine (if needed)
6. Set out equipment (consider if you are left- or right-handed, work from that side)
7. Collect an appropriate amount of the product from the store
8. Decant product into bath, dish or tub on trolley to the right of table (if right-handed)
9. Wash hands again
10. Start with first priority (or largest) bag size; place on scale and press tare
11. Count appropriate number of bags and place between scale and trolley

The art of speed packing

1. Open bags and weigh products in
2. When area begins to fill (and you are certain you will complete the packing 'run'), print labels for that size bag
3. While printing, seal bags and lay out in rows, ready for labelling
4. Label bags, applying barcode as smoothly as possible
5. Place bags into trays on trolley for stocking up shop floor
6. Cross this run off the note you wrote earlier (in case you are interrupted and someone else needs to finish your work), and repeat with all bag sizes
7. Seal any remaining produce into bag/sack and return to store
8. Clean down station
9. Fill in packing list with number packed, delivery date for organic goods, check you have cleaned the station, and sign your name

Other notes

- Sealing: Small grip seal bags are sealed by hand, handheld sealing machines are for 500g and 1kg bags, the electric sealer is for larger 3kg and 5kg bags
- Waste: Stow card and plastic beneath tables, to be moved to recycling throughout the day; put all other waste and food waste straight into the bin (not into the sink)
- Extractor fan: To be used when packing fine powders
- Sticky foods: If a product is stuck together, dump into tub and break up in advance of packing with plastic bags over your hands
- Mixing: Collect all goods first to ensure everything is in stock, weigh into tubs, label, pack as soon as possible; see it through from beginning to end
- What to do with remnants at the end of a sack: If there is not enough to fill a bag for the shelf, sell it at half price (if it's more than half-filled), or give away free to staff

End of day cleaning

- Empty packing room of all food (to warehouse if unpacked, to shop floor if packed or a sellable remnant, into staff room or bin if not)
- Empty packing room of all waste (to be recycled or binned)
- Thoroughly clean all dishes, tables, scales, trolleys and floor
- All scales onto charge and equipment switched off

Packing List

- Ideally written at the end of each day by a Packing Supervisor, who walks around the shop, noting what is missing from the shelves
- Start from a template list of all packed products so nothing is missed, including bag sizes and ideal run lengths to ensure consistency
- Include a list of priorities at the front for packers to start with the following day

Ways to ensure good stock levels, efficiency and sales

- Substantial packing slots: e.g., at least two to three hours of uninterrupted packing
- Attractive shop floor displays: Good lay out, full shelves, introducing colour and interest somehow (e.g. in an all beige flakes and grains area), stock, rotation, informative bag labels, clear lines of products, shelf tags correctly lined up
- Packing supervisor: To oversee and organise all packers and packing priorities throughout the day, have standing knowledge of out of stocks, deliveries due, write Packing List, etc.
- Packing Monday: On a day the shop is closed, uninterrupted packing time to stock up after the weekend and make a good start to the week with longer runs
- Overpacked section: To have a buffer zone in the store or in drawers on the shop floor for excess packed goods, especially of popular, fast-selling items in preparation for busy weekends or Christmas