

RPC Position Statement: Design & Sustainability

Background

The design stage of a product is where critical choices are made that can affect the rest of the products lifecycle. Incorporating sustainability into the design stage can lead to minimising environmental impact while still fulfilling the functions of the product, and satisfying the needs of the customer and consumer throughout the supply chain.

Designing for sustainability means that impacts throughout the whole lifecycle of the product will be taken into consideration from raw material use to end-of-life. This approach is vital as companies come under increasing pressure to reduce the environmental impacts of their products and services throughout the whole lifecycle.

RPC's Position

RPC strives to design products to enable positive environmental impacts throughout the rest of the supply chain; reducing energy impact, reducing water usage, preventing food or product waste, and increasing the reuse and recycling rate of products.

Initiatives to ensure positive environmental performance include designing weight out of products through the process of lightweighting, substituting heavier materials with plastic, using recycled or biobased plastic content in products and ensuring that products are adequately protected by their packaging.

Recyclability by design is a key consideration for products at the design stage in order to ensure that optimum levels of plastic can be recovered at end of life. Where appropriate, the ability to incorporate post-consumer or post-industrial recycled plastics is also considered at this stage.

RPC recognises that there needs to be a balance between innovation, technical capability, usability and recyclability in order to design sustainable products.

