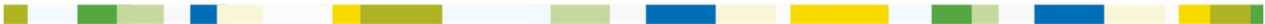


MANUAL FOR THE CORRECT USE OF GLASS CONTAINERS



VETRI SPECIALI S.p.A.

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1 - SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This document provides guidance on the correct use of hollow glass containers intended for the packaging and preservation of solid or liquid products, whether pressurised or non-pressurised, such as: still or semi-sparkling wine, sparkling wine, champagne, spirits, liqueurs, edible oil, vinegar, still or sparkling water, syrups and other liquid food products, whether carbonated or non-carbonated.

The purpose of this document is to describe the hazards associated with these containers and to define the good practices required to preserve their integrity throughout the entire life cycle, from delivery to consumption (receipt, storage, filling, transport, use and consumption), in order to prevent risks to personal safety, protect the product contained and ensure the correct functionality of the container at every stage of use.

This document does not replace the employer's risk assessment, nor the instructions issued by the manufacturers of the plants, machinery and equipment used to handle the container.

When using the container, the user is required to keep and use it with the diligence of a reasonably prudent person.

NOTE

The dimensional and functional characteristics specific to each article — capacity, weight, finish type, filling level, thermal shock resistance (ΔT), surface coating level, axial load — are stated exclusively in the technical drawing and/or in the article data sheet, which may be requested from the distributor.

WARNING

Not all containers are tested to hold pressurised liquid. Unless provided for in the data sheet, do not introduce carbonated products, products refermented in the bottle, or liquids that may develop pressure (unwanted fermentation, unstabilised products).

PROHIBITION

In the event of reuse, whether domestic or otherwise, it is prohibited to introduce pressurised liquid into any container, except where specified by the manufacturer in the data sheet.

2 - CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GLASS CONTAINER AND WHY IT BREAKS

Glass is one of the most widely used materials in the food sector. It is hygienic and chemically inert, as it does not release substances that could alter the product contained, and it is suitable for food contact. A further advantage is its complete recyclability, which allows it to be recovered and reused 100%, keeping its physical and mechanical characteristics unchanged indefinitely and contributing to environmental sustainability and to the circular economy.

Unlike other materials, glass is naturally brittle and does not deform before breaking. Its strength depends mainly on the condition of the outer surface and not on its thickness: breakage is in fact generally triggered at surface defects which, when subjected to constant stress, can propagate until they compromise the integrity of the container and cause it to fracture. For this reason, protecting the surface of the container is essential in order to preserve its integrity and mechanical strength.

A glass container may break as a result of impacts, drops, excessive compression or tension, scratches, chipping, thermal shock or improper use. Even apparently limited damage can compromise the strength of the container and cause it to break suddenly during handling, filling, transport, display on the shelf or in the consumer's hand. A bottle can in fact break without warning even days or weeks after the event that damaged it, with the risk of injuring people and contaminating the product contained.

Damage	How it occurs	Effect
Scuffing from rubbing	During use: abrasion from contact with hard or metal bodies or the like. During processing: line pressure accumulation on conveyors, poorly adjusted guides, transfer stars, badly packed pallets, vibration during transport or similar operations.	Opaque whitish bands or scratches, large or small; permanent reduction in mechanical strength.
Impact mark	Point impact against metal, another bottle, the floor or a hard body; a drop or impact even from a modest height or distance.	Localised defect (impact cone, chip type): can reduce the residual strength to zero.
Surface micro-fracture (checking)	Thermal shock, excessively forceful capping, deformation of the finish.	Fine cracks on the finish or on the base; preferential breakage initiation point.

3 - HAZARDS AND PROTECTION

Glass containers must be handled, moved and used with particular care, since their fragility can entail risks both to personal safety and to the integrity of the product contained. Knowing the main hazards associated with glass and adopting appropriate preventive measures make it possible to reduce the risk of breakage, injury and contamination by fragments.

Hazard	Typical scenario	Non-exhaustive examples of typical consequences
Breakage due to impact during handling	Insecure grip, drop, impact against work surfaces and machinery or hard objects.	Cuts to hands, forearms and lower limbs.
Thermal shock	Excessive temperature differential between container, liquid and environment.	Immediate or delayed breakage (checking).
Breakage on the line with scattering of fragments	Breakage in the rinser, filler, capper, tunnel or along the conveyors.	Food contamination by a sharp foreign body; product recall.
Pallet collapse	Irregular layer pads, wet packaging, uneven floor, loosening of the shrink wrap.	Instability and overturning of the pallet with possible spillage of containers, cuts, abrasion, crushing.
Cuts during unwrapping: pallet or container	Use of a cutter or blade in contact with the glass.	Scratching/scoring of the container with consequent breakage, cuts.

3.1 - Personal protective equipment

Depending on the process being carried out and on the use made of the containers, wear suitable PPE on the basis of your own risk assessment. Non-exhaustive example of typical recommended PPE: cut-resistant gloves, safety footwear, goggles, dedicated tools for collecting broken glass.

PROHIBITION

Never pick up glass shards resulting from breakages with bare hands.

NOTE

It remains the Employer's responsibility to assess the risk and, accordingly, to introduce specific PPE.

4 - RECEIPT AND STORAGE

4.1 - Inspection on receipt

Inspection on arrival is the only moment at which it is still possible to distinguish transport damage from damage generated during production. It must be carried out before the product is moved.

- Check that the product supplied conforms to the order.
- Check that the delivery note, article code, batch and quantity match.
- Check the integrity of the packaging: film taut and not torn, top frames and layer pads intact.
- Check that there are no evident signs of impact, tipping, crushing, traces of breakage or of liquid.
- Check that there is no moisture: wet cartons and layer pads lose their load-bearing capacity.

NOTE

Where anomalies or damage are found, the supplier must be informed promptly. To this end, a written reservation must be entered on the delivery note, adequate photographic documentation must be collected and the non-conforming material must be segregated to prevent its use. It is also important to keep the packaging and the containers concerned, holding them available for inspection or return.

PROHIBITION

Damaged containers must never be used under any circumstances.

4.2 - Storage conditions

Parameter	Requirement
Location	Enclosed, covered and clean environment, sheltered from the weather. Outdoor storage is not recommended, even under a tarpaulin.
Support surface	Flat and stable flooring or surface.
Temperature	Stable, avoiding sharp temperature swings.
Humidity and condensation	Dry and ventilated environment. Acclimatise the packed product before opening it. Condensation alters the friction between containers and weakens the packaging.
Heat and light	Do not expose to direct sunlight and keep away from sources of intense heat (do not place near heat generators or radiators).

Parameter	Requirement
Contamination	Do not store near odorous substances, solvents, detergents or dusty materials.
Stacking	Store pallets on the ground. Stacking pallets is not permitted without a prior assessment and risk analysis by the Employer. In any case, do not stack pallets of different formats, partly picked, wet, unstable or damaged.
Batch use	FIFO management (First In, First Out).

4.3 - Handling

- Use suitable equipment.
- Insert the forks fully into the pallets, using clean and undamaged forks; lift and set down without jerking.
- Do not drag, push or rotate pallets on the floor and do not knock them against racking or other pallets.
- Do not rub pallets against each other during handling operations, in order to avoid tearing or damaging the protective stretch film. Any openings or tears in the packaging, if not promptly restored, can allow contaminants to enter and compromise the integrity of the product.
- Move pallets in a stable and controlled manner, limiting speed and avoiding sudden braking: vibration and deceleration generate glass-to-glass rubbing inside the pallet and can cause damage that is not immediately visible and that compromises the strength of the container.
- Do not handle the packaging roughly.

5 - PREPARATION FOR FILLING

5.1 - Opening the packaging unit, depalletising and line conveying

- Remove the shrink film and any protections, avoiding contact between metal blades and glass; use tools with a stop or slide the protection off.
- Set the gripping pressures of the depalletisers to the minimum value that ensures the load is held; check pads and contact surfaces.
- In push systems, ensure alignment between the pallet plane and the transfer plane: a difference in level causes impacts on the base.
- Minimise line pressure accumulation: long rows of containers pushed against one another produce continuous rubbing. Favour low-pressure accumulation.
- Adjust guides, side rails and curves to avoid prolonged sliding contact (the container scraping or rubbing over a period of time) against metal parts; eliminate steps and sharp edges at transfer points.
- Pay attention to line noise as an indicator of possible process criticalities: accumulation points on the line cause an increase in glass-to-glass contact and impact, signalling a condition that is damaging the product.
- Where operations are carried out manually, handle the container and the packaging with care and attention.

WARNING

To ensure correct traceability, it is necessary to avoid processing several batches of the same article at the same time and to keep the logistics label so that the batch can be identified.

PROHIBITION

Containers that have been dropped must be removed from the operating area immediately and must never be put back on the line, as they may have invisible damage capable of compromising their integrity.

5.2 - Rinsing

- Rinse the containers immediately before filling; in the event of a surplus, do not repack containers that are still wet.
- Use drinking water suitable for food contact, filtered and sanitised where appropriate, and ensure that all residual water is completely emptied from the container.
- Check that nozzles and inverting grippers neither knock against nor rub the finish.
- Pay attention to line noise as an indicator of possible process criticalities: an increase in glass-to-glass contact signals a condition that is damaging the product.

WARNING

Do not use detergents, disinfectants or additives: they can alter the surface treatments and the behaviour in food contact. A slightly acidic mixture is preferable.

5.3 - Inspection and rejection

Reject containers that show: chips, fine or more evident fractures, in any position; a damaged or deformed finish or one with residues; foreign bodies inside. Also reject any container that has been dropped or that shows signs of evident impact, even if apparently intact.

6 - FILLING

Filling operations must be carried out in compliance with the specifications of the article, paying particular attention to the thermal and mechanical stresses generated by the process.

6.1 - Filling level and headspace

The level indicated on the technical drawing is a safety parameter and must be complied with. The headspace absorbs the expansion of the liquid as the temperature varies. A container filled beyond the prescribed level loses this reserve and places stress on the closure or on the container itself.

WARNING

Strictly comply with the filling level indicated on the technical drawing, checking it at regular intervals and not only at the start of production.

Metrological requirement: containers used as measuring container bottles are subject to Directive 75/107/EEC as amended, which defines the metrological characteristics and the maximum permissible errors on the nominal capacity, together with the indelible markings applied to the container, including the nominal capacity, the reversed epsilon symbol and the manufacturer's mark.

The packer remains responsible for complying with the nominal quantity declared on the packaged product and for carrying out the checks needed to verify its conformity.

NOTE

The WELMEC 6.12 guide provides operational and good practice guidance for the correct application of Directive 75/107/EEC as amended.

6.2 - Filling temperature

- The filling temperature must meet the requirements of the product and be compatible with the temperature differential permitted for the article.
- Avoid filling containers that are significantly warmer or colder than the product.
- In hot filling, allow for the vacuum generated on cooling: it places stress on the closure.

6.3 - Thermal shock

Glass is particularly sensitive to sudden temperature changes rather than to the absolute temperature. What can compromise its integrity is in fact the presence of large thermal differences between the various areas of the container. In particular, rapid cooling is generally more critical than rapid heating, since it generates stresses on the outer surface of the glass that can promote the initiation of breakage. Thermal shock resistance is a characteristic specific to each individual article.

In order to reduce the risk of breakage due to thermal shock and to preserve the integrity of glass containers, a number of operational precautions must be adopted to limit the temperature differences to which the container is subjected. In particular:

- Comply with the maximum temperature differential permitted for the article (approximately ΔT 42.5°).
- Build the thermal sequence in steps, not in jumps.
- Pay attention to cold filling into a warm container, to rinsing with hot water, to pasteurisation tunnels and to sleeve shrink tunnels.

NOTE

Thermal shock resistance is determined by tests carried out in accordance with standard ISO 7459, which defines the methods for assessing the ability of glass containers to withstand temperature changes without breaking.

7 - CLOSURE

Tightness and safety do not depend on the container or on the closure taken separately, but on the way the two are matched.

NOTE

The closure applicable to each individual article must be suited to the dimensional specifications indicated on the technical drawing.

- Centre the capping head on the finish: misalignment generates lateral loads and checking on the neck.
- Set the application force to the minimum value that ensures tightness: excessively forceful capping is a frequent cause of scoring of the finish.
- Check the verticality and stability of the container; replace worn guides, jaws and pads.
- Do not cap containers with a damaged, rough or dirty finish.
- Every change of supplier or type of closure requires preliminary tightness tests to be carried out.

8 - HEAT TREATMENTS AND SUBSEQUENT PROCESSING

- **Pasteurisation and tunnels:** during these stages, the heating and subsequent cooling of the containers must take place gradually, through temperature-controlled zones and with limited thermal differentials, in compliance with the maximum temperature differential permitted for the container [ΔT max per zone].

It is also necessary to check that the spray distribution is uniform over the entire surface of the container, avoiding concentrated and localised jets that could generate abrupt temperature differences, particularly on containers that are initially cold, causing thermal stresses and increasing the risk of breakage.

- **Shrink sleeve:** set the tunnel temperature to the minimum value needed to ensure correct shrinking of the material; pay attention to the contrast between the hot environment of the tunnel and the refrigerated product, in order to avoid thermal shocks that could compromise the integrity of the glass.
- **Decoration, coating, screen printing:** during these activities, controlled heating and cooling curves compatible with the characteristics of the container must be adopted. Such processing can alter or remove the original surface treatments applied, reducing abrasion resistance and increasing sensitivity to scratching and rubbing. Any processing cycles not provided for must be agreed with Vetri Speciali in advance.

NOTE

Responsibility for passing on the requirements of this document to third parties lies with the customer/distributor.

PROHIBITION

Never freeze a filled container under any circumstances, nor expose it to temperatures below the freezing point of the product.

9 - PACKAGING, PALLETISING AND TRANSPORT OF THE FINISHED PRODUCT

Once the product has been packaged, the container can no longer be replaced without compromising the integrity of the pack. For this reason, secondary and tertiary packaging plays a fundamental protective role: it must protect the product from abnormal mechanical stresses during handling, storage and transport, prevent direct contact and rubbing between containers and help absorb impacts and vibration that could damage or break them.

- Use cell dividers, separators or partitions in the cartons to avoid excessive impacts and vibration.
- Avoid impacts between cases of finished product, preserving their integrity during handling and storage operations.
- Make sure the load unit is stable, with layer pads between the tiers, interlayer pads and corner boards; stretch film taut and complete, anchored to the pallet.
- Check that the pallet is intact, clean and free of protruding nails; do not exceed the number of tiers and stackable pallets provided for.
- Wet packaging loses much of its load-bearing capacity: protect the load from moisture.
- For part-load shipments and distance selling, provide dedicated packaging: packaging designed for full pallets is not suitable for shipping individual parcels.
- Secure and stabilise the load in the loading compartment, avoiding empty spaces in which it could shift. Continuous vibration is a primary cause of surface damage.
- Avoid prolonged exposure to high temperatures and to temperature swings, particularly in intercontinental shipments.

10 - MANAGING BREAKAGE IN A PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT

The breakage of a container in an open area of the line must be managed as a potential contamination event and not as a simple machine stoppage. In the field of food hygiene and safety, glass is in fact a physical hazard capable of contaminating the product with sharp fragments; for this reason the risk associated with its breakage must be properly assessed and managed within the packer's HACCP plan (Reg. EC 852/2004).

- Stop the section of the line concerned and cordon off the area.
- Reject all open containers present in the area concerned, together with the number of containers upstream and downstream defined by the company procedure.
- Clean down the machine and the area: remove all glass fragments; pay attention to areas where residues can accumulate (guides, ducts, tanks, conveyors, guards) and decontaminate the rinsing water if affected.
- Check nozzles, valves, stars and guides: the breakage may have damaged components that would cause further breakages or contamination.
- Authorise restart only once the clean-down operations have been completed; where there is reasonable doubt as to the possible presence of fragments in product already closed, block the batch.
- Record the event: date, time, point on the line, format and batch, quantity rejected, presumed cause, actions taken.

In the event of breakage in the storage area, the intervention must be preceded by making the area concerned safe, in order to prevent further risks to people and to the product. Fragments must be collected exclusively using dedicated equipment and never with bare hands. Before the material is removed, the event must be properly documented by taking photographs.

10.1 - First aid

Hazard	Typical scenario	Possible consequence
Cuts	Apply pressure to stop the bleeding and seek medical assessment if necessary.	Glass can leave fragments in the wound even when the injury appears superficial.
Fragments in the eyes	Do not rub, do not attempt removal, seek specialist assessment immediately if necessary.	Irritation and intense pain, redness and heavy watering of the eye, sensation of a foreign body in the eye, scratches or abrasions of the cornea.

11 - PROHIBITIONS — WHAT MUST NEVER BE DONE

Do not	Why
Use the container improperly.	Glass breaks because it is brittle.
Use containers suitable only for still liquids to bottle carbonated, refermented or sparkling products.	Product not tested for pressure: risk of bursting.
Pack unstabilised liquids that may ferment.	Development of unforeseen pressure in a container not designed for it.
Fill beyond the level indicated on the technical drawing.	The headspace is eliminated and the finish and closure are placed under stress.
Freeze the packaged product or expose it below freezing point.	Water expands by about 9% when it freezes: breakage or ejection of the closure.
Subject the container to temperature differentials above those permitted.	Immediate breakage or delayed micro-cracking (checking).
Open film or protections with cutters or blades resting on the glass.	A scratch from a blade permanently reduces strength.
Put back on the line a container with an evident impact cone, chip type.	The damage is carried downstream: breakage is likely.
Keep pressure accumulations with continuous glass-to-glass contact.	Formation of surface damage from rubbing.
Stack pallets, or wet, damaged, partial, unstable pallets or pallets of different formats.	Collapse of the stack, massive breakage, risk of crushing.
Store outdoors, in a damp environment or near heat sources.	Degradation of the packaging, condensation, instability, contamination.
Use detergents or chemical treatments that have not been agreed.	Alteration of the surface treatments and of food contact compliance.
Pick up glass fragments with bare hands.	Deep cuts; fragments that remain in the wound.
Reuse the container for a second filling that is not provided for.	Residual strength cannot be determined.

NOTE

It is recommended that appropriate information signage be displayed in goods receiving areas, in warehouses and along production and packaging lines, clearly and visibly setting out the main prohibitions, the precautions to be taken and the actions that must never be carried out under any circumstances during the handling, storage and use of glass containers. These instructions must draw operators' attention to the behaviours to be avoided, to the correct way of managing anomalies and breakages and to the measures needed to prevent accidents, product contamination and damage to the containers.

12 - WARNINGS FOR THE END CONSUMER

Consumers come into contact with the container only when the product is already packaged, closed and ready for use. The party responsible for placing the packaged product on the market is therefore the main channel of communication with the end user and must ensure that adequate information and warnings are available, including through this manual, for safe use of the product. Such information may be provided through the label, the back label, hang tags, gift boxes, information materials or dedicated web pages and must be consistent with the obligations laid down by Regulation (EU) 2023/988 on general product safety.

12.1 Warnings to be communicated

- Always handle containers with care; glass is fragile: an impact can weaken them without leaving visible marks and breakage may occur much later.
- Always take a secure hold of containers with both hands: take care when your hands or the surface of the containers are wet, as the glass becomes slippery and the risk of dropping them increases.
- Do not run while holding containers: in the event of an accidental fall, trip or loss of balance the glass could break and cause wounds or other serious injuries.
- Do not use containers as a weapon or blunt object: they must not be used to strike people, animals or objects, as they can cause wounds and serious damage to property or persons.
- Never throw containers: striking a person or an animal, even at low speed, can cause wounds and injuries that may be serious.
- Do not bang containers against rigid surfaces (doors, tables, floors, walls): this can compromise their integrity and create dangerous situations for yourself and for others.
- Do not push or roll containers: an apparently slight impact can damage them or cause them to break.
- Do not use containers as a toy: accidental breakage can cause cuts and wounds.
- Keep containers away from the edge of tables, shelves or balconies: they could fall accidentally and break, causing damage to property or injury to people.
- Keep containers out of the reach of small children.
- Do not use containers for purposes other than those intended: do not use them as a hammer, lever or improvised tool to press or move other objects.
- Do not open doors, windows or drawers using containers: localised stresses can damage them.
- Do not use containers as a doorstop, wedge or support for other objects.
- Do not sit, stand or lean on containers. Even an empty container can break suddenly under load.
- Do not try to catch falling containers: the natural reflex to retrieve them can increase the risk of cuts and injuries.
- Do not carry several containers at once by hooking your fingers into their necks: losing your grip can cause the entire load to fall.
- Do not walk barefoot in an area where there are broken containers or where glass fragments are suspected to be present.
- Do not leave containers in passageways, on stairs, on landings or near doors.
- Do not use containers as targets for games, challenges or recreational activities.
- Do not use containers as a holder for candles, fireworks or other devices that generate heat.
- Do not use containers for experiments, pranks or challenges circulating on social media.
- Never drink directly from containers that show damage to the rim or the finish: this could cause cuts or entail the risk of swallowing glass fragments.
- Do not attempt to remove a jammed closure by improper use of knives, screwdrivers, pliers or other metal tools.
- Open containers solely by removing the closure; do not use a sabre or similar implements, or strike the base violently against a hard body.
- Do not open containers with your teeth.
- Do not use containers as objects for sexual purposes.

- Do not eat pieces of glass.
- Do not attempt to repair a damaged container with glues, adhesive tapes or other systems: any such action could further compromise its strength and increase the risk of breakage.
- Cool containers only in the refrigerator or in iced water, never in the freezer. Never heat them in a microwave oven or in a conventional oven.
- Avoid sudden temperature swings: do not pour very hot liquids into cold bottles, do not cool hot bottles rapidly, and do not immerse a cold container in hot water or vice versa.
- Do not expose containers to heat sources that are not provided for: avoid direct contact with flames, hot plates, stoves, radiators, barbecues, fireplaces or other sources of intense heat.
- Do not leave containers exposed to direct sunlight, inside a car or on balconies and terraces for long periods: keep the product in a cool, dry place, protected from light and from heat sources, in order to preserve its quality and integrity.
- Do not open and do not consume the contents if the container shows visible damage to the glass (chips, cracks, even small ones), has suffered a fall or a significant impact, or shows anomalies in the closure system such as deformation, loosening or signs of leakage.
- Do not reuse the container for home-made carbonated or fermenting beverages (e.g. beer, carbonated water): in the absence of reliable information on the container's history of use, on the mechanical stresses it has undergone and on its state of preservation, its structural integrity cannot be assessed with certainty.
- In the event of breakage: move people and animals away, do not walk barefoot, do not pick up fragments with bare hands, and discard any food that may have been contaminated by fragments. For fragments in the eyes: do not rub and consult a doctor immediately.
- Place glass, including broken glass, in the separate glass collection, separating the cap and capsule in accordance with local instructions.

12.2 – Example of wording for a label or hang tag

WARNING

Glass is hard and fragile: handle with care.

Do not expose to heat sources, sunlight or frost. Do not freeze. Do not heat in a microwave or conventional oven.

Do not open if the glass is damaged.

NOTE

Adoption, adaptation to the product, translation and positioning on the packaging or on digital channels are the responsibility of the party placing the packaged product on the market.

13 – WARRANTY AND EXCLUSIONS

Vetri Speciali S.p.A. warrants that the container supplied conforms to the technical drawing, to the agreed specifications and to the applicable quality requirements. It also warrants its suitability for the intended use of the specific article, provided that the conditions of use, handling, storage and processing set out in this document are complied with.

Exclusions. The warranty does not apply where the damage is attributable, in whole or in part, to: use not in accordance with the technical documentation of the article or with this document; use for carbonated, refermented or unstabilised products where not provided for; failure to comply with the filling level; temperature differentials above those permitted, freezing, exposure to heat sources; mechanical damage caused after delivery (impacts, surface damage, drops, incorrectly set capping, improper handling); non-compliant storage, packaging or transport conditions, including the packaging of the finished product arranged by the customer; subsequent processing not agreed upon; reuse not provided for; failure to pass on to the consumer the warnings set out in point 12.

NOTE

This manual may be used to supplement staff training.

Document issued by Vetri Speciali S.p.A. for the benefit of its customers and of the supply chain. Internal circulation at the customer's premises, translation and operational adaptation are the responsibility of the customer. Tampering with or altering the document is prohibited.

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