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**Reusable packaging system design  
standard:**

Part 5:  
**Labeling**

Version 1.3  
August 2023

**Note:**

This version includes a new international reuse symbol and updated guidelines for color, fonts and signage.

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**RESOLVE**

# RESOLVE

*Draft Standard*

**2024**

## **Reusable Packaging System Design Standard: Labeling**

**NOTE:** This draft is under development and subject to change; it should not be used for reference purposes.

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# Contents

## Forward

## Introduction

- 1 Scope**
- 2 Normative reference**
- 3 Terms and definitions**
- 4 General visual requirements**
  - 4.1 Symbol
  - 4.2 Color
  - 4.3 Identification signage
  - 4.4 Navigational signage
  - 4.5 Instructional signage
- 5 Verbal requirements**
  - 5.1 Text
  - 5.2 Language
  - 5.3 Voice
  - 5.4 Vocabulary
  - 5.5 Tone
  - 5.6 Syntax
    - 5.6.1 English syntax
- 6 Imprint options**
- 7 Style and spatial considerations**
- 8 Labeling requirements for containers**
  - 8.1 Visual
  - 8.2 Digital
    - 8.2.1 Association with reuse symbol
  - 8.3 Verbal
  - 8.4 Additional labeling
- 9 Labeling requirements for collection points**
  - 9.1 Visual
  - 9.2 Digital
  - 9.3 Verbal
  - 9.4 Additional labeling
- Annex A (informative) Legal and regulatory considerations**
  - A.1 United States
  - A.2 Canada
  - A.3 European Union
  - A.4 Indonesia
- Annex B (informative) Reuse symbol exploratory concept**
  - B.1 The reuse rose
  - B.2 Other concepts

## Foreword

PR3 is a partnership between corporate, government and NGO stakeholders to create standards for reusable packaging systems. PR3's goal is to transform disconnected, proprietary, and small-scale reuse models into interoperable systems with common infrastructure. PR3 standards are meant to integrate, de-risk, and support reuse initiatives globally.

PR3 is a project of [RESOLVE](#), a Washington, D.C.-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that designs innovative, sustainable solutions to society's toughest challenges.

The document was prepared by PR3 with input from stakeholders across the value chain, including businesses, communities, workers, consumers, governments and public-interest groups.

This is a working draft document and is subject to change.

This edition cancels and replaces any previous editions.

A list and links to all parts of PR3's Reusable Packaging System Design standards can be found on the PR3 website, see <https://www.pr3standards.org/the-pr3-standards>.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to PR3 Technical Director at: <https://www.pr3standards.org/contact>

## Introduction

Single-use packaging is a critical threat to human health and the environment. Research shows that reuse has the greatest potential to dramatically reduce plastic production and greenhouse gas emissions compared to other packaging waste interventions.

As reusable packaging systems have emerged and expanded in recent years, they have been designed independently and are mostly small-scale, disconnected, and proprietary. They mostly operate within their own systems for collection and reverse logistics.

PR3 has developed the Reusable Packaging System Design standard with the goal of transforming these hundreds of disconnected reuse systems into an interoperable system that is more efficient, convenient, and affordable and has the ability to truly scale.

This document represents the component of the standard that focuses on *labeling*.

The objective of this document is to establish consistent identification guidelines that make it easy for consumers to identify containers, collection points, and other assets that are part of a reuse system.

It is important to note that this document is not intended to dictate product branding or marketing. It only requires certain additions to product labeling that ensure consumers have the information they need to properly participate in the reuse system. There is a separate standard for *digital* labeling. That standard sets requirements for digital tags that carry data for system operators to access and use to enable and track assets in the system.

This document is one of multiple parts that together make up the Reusable Packaging System Design Standards. Other parts include collection points, containers, digital, incentives, reverse logistics and washing. Links to all parts in the standard can be found at: <https://www.pr3standards.org/the-pr3-standards>.

# Reusable packaging system design – Specifications and recommendations

## Part 5: Labeling

### 1 Scope

This document specifies requirements and recommendations for labeling at various points in a reuse ecosystem.

It is applicable to containers that meet PR3 standard [Part 2: Containers](#) and are intended to be part of a shared reuse ecosystem.

It is applicable to container collection points that meet PR3 standard [Part 1: Collection points](#) and are intended to be part of the shared reuse ecosystem.

This document is also applicable to signage and educational materials in locations that provide, sell, collect and/or service reusable containers, including retailers, sports and entertainment venues, logistics and washing facilities, and public gathering spaces.

This document is only applicable to containers, collection points and locations that operate in a *shared* reuse ecosystem. The labeling and signage requirements in this document *do not* apply to reusable containers, products or services that operate in independent or proprietary reuse systems.

These standards do not preempt any industry standards or regulations related to food safety, quality or other topics that are often included in and related to product labeling. In general, PR3 standards are to be applied *in addition* to all other relevant labeling standards.

### 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document.

- DRAFT RES-001 – Reusable Packaging System Design Standard – Part 02: Container Design
- DRAFT RES-004 – Reusable Packaging System Design Standard – Part 03: Digital
- DRAFT PR3’s Reusable Packaging System Design Standard – Part 01: Collection Points

### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in PR3's Glossary of Terms apply.

In all clauses, the following verbal forms are used:

- Requirements are indicated by "SHALL" or "SHALL NOT"
- Recommendations indicated by "SHOULD" or "SHOULD NOT"
- Permission is indicated by "MAY" or "MAY NOT"

### 4 General visual requirements

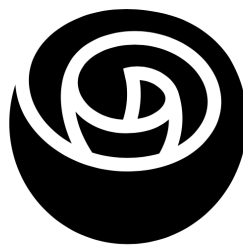
The following general visual requirements SHALL be incorporated throughout a reuse ecosystem.

Note: More specific visual requirements for containers and collection points are specified in Sections 8 and 9.

#### 4.1 Symbol

The reuse symbol SHALL be applied to components of the reuse ecosystem, including containers, collection points, and signage at participating venues and facilities.

Reuse symbol example 1



Reuse symbol example 2



## 4.2 Color

The base of the symbol SHALL be orange, black, or white. Suggested variations include dark and light backgrounds.



**orange**

**WEB:**  
HEX #ff6600

**PRINT:**  
0%C, 64%M, 100%Y, 0%K  
PANTONE 1505 C

**PAINT:**  
RAL 2008

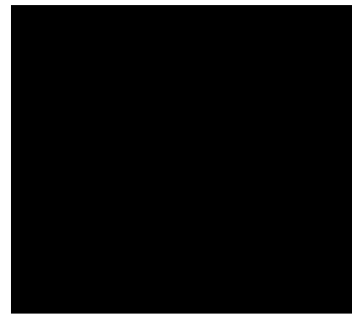
**TEXTILES:**  
PANTONE 16-1364 TPX  
Vibrant Orange



**white**

**WEB:**  
HEX #ffffff

**PRINT:**  
0%C, 0%M, 0%Y, 0%K



**black**

**WEB:**  
HEX #000000

**PRINT:**  
0%C, 0%M, 0%Y, 100%K



While the color describing the symbol used is “orange”, the following are the specific orange color keys that SHOULD be used for web, print, paint, and textiles:

- Web: HEX #ff6600
- Print: 0%C, 64%M, 100%Y, 0%K
- PANTONE 1505 C
- Paint: RAL 2008
- Textiles: PANTONE 16-1364 TPX, Vibrant orange

Orange SHOULD be applied to components of a reuse ecosystem, including containers, collection points, and signage on participating venues and facilities.

Orange MAY be applied to the reuse symbol or elsewhere on the component.

Black and white MAY be used instead of orange on components.

Colors other than orange, black, or white SHALL NOT be applied to the reuse symbol.

Color SHOULD be decided in the context of the container, collection point and signage to ensure the symbol and relevant text are legible.

Note: For example, an orange symbol on certain light colored, yellow, or orange containers might not be easily legible.

Note: Why orange?

The orange color is noted for its:

- Uniqueness — The landscape of waste and sustainability visual communications is dominated with greens, some blues and to a lesser extent browns.
- Distinctiveness — To avoid confusion with recycling, orange is associated with reuse. Orange complements green - it's a near 'opposite' on the color spectrum.
- Signal — Orange is a signal color. Orange for signage is typically used to grab attention, such as on warning signs. This will draw people's awareness to the symbol. It will be used quite small and thus secondary in nature, so a good signal color will help the symbol stand out.
- Meaning — An important consideration is the emotional & symbolic meanings of the color orange. Orange is associated with meanings of joy, warmth, heat, sunshine, enthusiasm, creativity, success, encouragement, change, determination, health, stimulation, happiness, fun, enjoyment, balance, freedom, expression, and fascination.

Symbol and color example 1



### 4.3 Identification signage

Note: Identification signage is a visual marker that displays the name and function of a space or place. Examples of this type of sign could be a large building sign over the main entrance to a sorting or cleaning facility.

Identification signage SHALL include visual cues that do not rely on verbal language or text.

Below examples SHOULD be applied to participating venues and facilities in a reuse ecosystem.

Identification signage example 1



Identification signage example 2



#### 4.4 Navigational signage

Note: Navigational signage provides cues that consumers need in order to navigate a space once they are there. While the design of directional signs should harmonize with the environment they are in, they also need to stand out enough to be easily recognizable. An example of directional signs would be the signs sports fans at a stadium would see directing where to leave or return their reusable cups and food containers.

Navigational signage SHALL include visual cues that do not rely on verbal language or text.

Below examples SHOULD be applied as navigation signage where appropriate in a reuse ecosystem.

Navigational signage example 1



## 4.5 Instructional signage

Note: Instructional signage explains how to, and how NOT to, use a space. These signs might pertain to legal codes or space-specific rules. Examples of these signs would be signs informing consumers about where to dump or compost the food or beverages from the reusable container before they place it into a collection point.

Instructional signage SHALL include visual cues that do not rely on verbal language or text.

Below examples SHOULD be applied to/as instructional signage where appropriate in a reuse ecosystem.

Instructional signage example 1



## 5 Verbal requirements

The following general verbal language components SHALL be applied throughout a reuse ecosystem.

Note: More specific verbal requirements for containers and collection points are specified in subsequent sections.

## **5.1 Text**

The text of the label SHALL appear on the most outer surface of the container or collection point.

Particulars of the labeling SHALL be easily legible and clearly comprehensible.

## **5.2 Language**

The labeling SHALL appear in the local language.

The labeling SHOULD also include additional language(s) that are commonly used in the region.

If more than one language is required on the label, the content of all language versions SHALL be identical.

Inclusion of multiple languages SHALL NOT adversely affect the readability of the label.

Different text elements for each language SHOULD be grouped, where possible.

## **5.3 Voice**

Note: Voice refers to vocabulary, tone, point of view, and syntax that makes phrases, sentences, and paragraphs flow in a particular manner.

Overall, the voice SHOULD be reliable, purposeful, and inspiring.

Writing SHOULD be clear and technical and still understandable to the consumer.,

Writing SHOULD include enough information to inform the vendor and technical reader, in addition to the consumer.

The writing style SHALL be that of a confident and expert writer who is informing the public without any condescension.

## **5.4 Vocabulary**

Note: Vocabulary refers to words.

Vocabulary SHALL be basic.

Vocabulary SHALL include words that are most resistant to replacement, referring to the most common and universal elements of human experience, such as parts of the body (hand, eye), universal features of the environment (container, water) and common activities (eat, throw).

## 5.5 Tone

Note: Tone in writing refers to the writer's attitude toward the reader and the subject of the message.

Tone SHALL be formal, encouraging, and assertive.

Note: A formal tone is thorough and direct, yet respectful.

Note: An encouraging tone is supportive and understanding. It should help inspire readers to take action.

Note: An assertive tone exudes confidence and authority. Action that follows instructions should feel like the obvious response to this confident tone. It can also be insistent and straightforward. This tone can be used to help you persuade your audience about a topic.

## 5.6 Syntax

Note: Syntax refers to the arrangement of words in sentences, clauses, and phrases, and the formation of sentences.

Sentence structure SHALL be clear and consistent.

Word choice SHALL be modern and generally understood.

Syntax SHOULD aim to use simple words with a few syllables.

Long sentences SHOULD NOT be used.

Multiple short and simple sentences SHOULD be used instead of one long and complex sentence, especially for new information.

### 5.6.1 English syntax

Note: The rules of syntax can be quite complex and vary greatly by language, as well as by time period and place. Depending on the language, syntax rules might be very restrictive, or quite flexible.

English writing SHALL be in complete sentences.

Note: A complete sentence requires a subject and a verb and expresses a complete thought.

In English writing, separate ideas SHOULD be written in separate sentences.

English word order SHOULD follow the subject-verb-object sequence.

## 6 Imprint options

Note: Manufacturers of packaging materials have various techniques for labeling and identification.

Printing MAY be used.

Note: Printing is a method to deliver specific information on a package through visual elements such as a mark/symbol or with words. Printing might not be possible on many of the products covered by these guidelines.

Colors and tints MAY be used.

Note: Colors and tints are options for achieving visual differentiation. These techniques are assumed to be optional since they may pose financial and technical risks.

Embossing, debossing, or etching MAY be used, as long as the container design meets the requirements of [PR3 standard Part 2: Container design](#).

Note: Embossing, debossing, and etching might be an effective strategy when the mark/symbol is large enough to identify and the words associated with the mark are clearly and easily read without glasses or aid of any optical devices.

## 7 Style and spatial considerations

Note: The lack of space may pose a challenge for manufacturers and brand owners when considering language and symbol/mark usage on packaging.

Including the word “REUSABLE” alone SHALL NOT meet labeling requirements for components of a reuse ecosystem, such as containers and collection points.

Note: The U.S. Federal Trade Commission’s Guide for the Use of Refillable Claims (§ [260.14 \(PDF\)](#)) also indicate that including the word “reusable” is not enough.

Including a third-party certification logo alone without any qualifying language SHALL NOT meet labeling requirements.

Note: This also does not meet U.S. Federal Trade Commission guidelines, and the logo alone may not be recognized by all consumers.



When adequate space is a challenge, as much of the required content as possible SHOULD be included on containers and collection points in a reuse ecosystem.

At a minimum, the reuse symbol SHALL be clearly visible on components of a reuse ecosystem, including on containers and collection points.

## **8 Labeling requirements for containers**

### **8.1 Visual**

The reuse symbol SHALL be a visual requirement on containers in a reuse ecosystem.

**Note:** The reuse symbol will be a strong visual cue, based on wide recognition not only on containers, but also on collection points and vendor and facility signage. The symbol's design was created so that consumers and other users will have an immediate understanding that the container is reusable and part of a reuse ecosystem. An exploratory concept is provided in Annex B.

The reuse symbol SHALL be included on the outer surface of the container

The reuse symbol SHALL be applied in the required color(s) of orange, black, and/or white or shall be colorless (e.g. embossed).

The reuse symbol color(s) SHALL be decided in the context of the location and material to which it will be applied. For example, a black symbol might be more legible on certain materials versus an orange or white symbol. Similarly, a black or white symbol might be desirable on certain branded materials and containers, where it will distract less while still being clearly legible.

The reuse symbol SHALL be applied directly onto the container in a durable application process. It shall not be applied to a removable paper label or sleeve.

**Note:** This is important for ensuring that containers with removable labels can be identified and returned to the system even if the label has been removed.

The symbol MAY be applied using a durable sticker or seal, or directly imprinted or embossed on the container.

The reuse symbol SHALL be large enough to be viewed and identified without the use of magnifying or most corrective glasses at a size of no smaller than 3mm or 1/8 of an inch in height.

In some jurisdictions additional visual symbols MAY be required. For example, in Germany a "Refill" logo for reusable bottles is standardized.

## 8.2 Digital

A data carrier (digital tag) SHALL be included on the outer surface of the container.

Note: Typical data carriers include barcodes, QR codes, and RFID.

The data carrier SHALL be created and applied according to [PR3 standard Part 3: Digital](#).

The data carrier SHALL be created and applied according to [PR3 standard Part 2: Container Design](#).

The data carrier SHALL be applied directly onto the container in a durable application process. It shall not be applied to a removable paper label or sleeve.

Note: This is important for ensuring that containers with removable labels can be identified and returned to the system even if the label has been removed.

The data carrier MAY be applied using a durable sticker or seal, or directly imprinted or embossed on the container.

### 8.2.1 Association with reuse symbol

If more than one data carrier is included on the container, then the reuse symbol SHALL accompany the reuse data carrier.

Note: Because other barcodes or QR codes might also be applied to containers, it is important that the reuse data carrier is clearly associated with reuse so that the correct one is scanned during collection and reverse logistics.

The reuse symbol MAY be adjacent to the reuse data carrier.

The reuse symbol and data carrier MAY be applied together inside a box outline.

The data carrier MAY be incorporated into the reuse symbol.

## 8.3 Verbal

The container SHALL include verbal language to specify clear instruction for container return.

Text SHALL indicate that the container is returnable.

Text SHALL include information about how to return the container to a collection point.

Text MAY direct users to a web URL for return instructions.

Text MAY direct users to scan the digital tag or QR code to be directed to a website for return instructions

The container SHALL include verbal language to specify the type and value of a deposit or other return incentive that is associated with the container.

Text MAY vary by region and should be printed according to the location where the product is intended to be sold and consumed.

## **8.4 Additional labeling**

Participating members SHALL not prohibit or impede the placement of the required labeling, assuming it complies with local codes and regulations.

The information specific to reuse SHOULD be accommodated on the container in a single area unobstructed by the brand packaging and/or label in a boxed area.

The information specific to reuse MAY be located on the side or bottom of the packaging, depending on the type of packaging used. For example, for a reusable bottle, the reuse label can be imprinted on the side of the bottle or the bottom.

If a reusable container is intended for multiple locations and/or jurisdictions, a blank area SHOULD be included on the container that is adjacent to the reuse symbol and digital tag onto which information specific to the locale can be applied via a sticker or stamp. For example, a sticker with return instructions for a certain distribution area can be attached on the blank area.

Labeling information that is specific to the contents of the container, such as batch number SHALL be removable and reapplied in subsequent use cycles.

## **9 Labeling requirements on collection points**

### **9.1 Visual**

The reuse symbol SHALL be the main visual requirement on collection points in a reuse ecosystem.

Note: The reuse symbol will be a strong visual cue, based on wide recognition not only on collection points, but also on containers and vendor and facility signage. The symbol's design was created so that consumers and other users will have an immediate understanding that the container is reusable and part of a reuse ecosystem. An exploratory concept is provided in Annex B.

The reuse symbol SHALL be included on the outer surface of the collection point.

The reuse symbol SHALL be a dominant visual cue on the collection point, with any additional symbology, logos, images or videos, including from sponsorship or advertisers, appearing not more prominent than the reuse logo.

The reuse symbol SHALL be large enough to be viewed and identified from a reasonable distance, such as from across a street.

The reuse symbol SHALL be applied in the required color(s) of orange, black and/or white or shall be colorless (e.g. embossed).

The reuse symbol color(s) SHALL be decided in the context of the location and material to which it will be applied. For example, a black symbol might be more legible on certain materials versus an orange or white symbol.

If the reuse symbol is not applied in orange, then the collection point SHALL incorporate orange in other obvious ways.

Note: Since orange is the universal color for reuse, including orange on the collection point will indicate it is a for *reusable* containers and help distinguish it from blue recycling bins, green compost bins, etc.

The reuse symbol SHALL be located in a prominent location(s) on the collection point. I.e., it must be applied on the front and on additional sides if visible.

The collection point SHALL incorporate visual cues that specify instructions for container return, including instruction for disposing food and beverage waste before the container is returned, if applicable.

Instructional signage MAY be adjacent to the collection point.

When in proximity to existing recycle, trash, and compost bins, graphic elements such as arrows MAY be incorporated into signage to relay instructions.

Collection point visual signage example 1:



## 9.2 Digital

A data carrier (digital tag) SHALL be included on the outer surface of the collection point.

Note: Typical data carriers include barcodes, QR codes, and RFID.

The data carrier SHALL be created and applied according to [PR3 standard Part 3: Digital](#).

The data carrier SHALL be created and applied according to [PR3 standard Part 2: Collection Points](#).

The data carrier SHALL be applied directly onto the collection point in a durable application process.

The data carrier SHALL be large enough to be identified without the use of corrective glasses.

The data carrier SHALL be placed in a prominent location(s) on the collection point. I.e., it must be applied on the front and can be applied on additional sides if visible.

## 9.3 Verbal

The collection point SHALL include verbal language to specify clear instruction for container return.

Text SHALL indicate that the collection point is for returnable containers.

Text SHALL include instructions for disposing food and beverage waste before the container is returned, if applicable.

Text MAY direct users to a web URL for more instructions or other information.

Text MAY direct users to scan the digital tag or QR code for more instructions or other information.

#### **9.4 Additional labeling**

Collection point labeling SHALL accommodate users with disabilities, including those that are color blind, visually impaired and/or hearing impaired.

At a minimum, collection points SHOULD also comply with the Americans with Disability Act regulations, especially relating to Chapter 7: Communication Elements and Features

## Annex A (informative)

### Legal and regulatory considerations

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) in the United States, the Competition Bureau (CB) in Canada and various local governments across the globe have created various guidelines and laws for marketers of product packaging to follow when making any claims for reusability. The following are a few examples of requirements that are taken into consideration when a package is marketed as reusable. Numerous additional requirements exist around the world and must be adhered to in their jurisdictions.

#### A.1 United States

In the United States, PR3's Reuse standards are designed to comply with the Federal Trade Commission's Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims, aka '[the Green Guides](#)' (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 16 Part 260) and Section 5 of the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. 45. The FTC Green Guides states the following. See also Federal Trade Commission's Green Guides § 260.12: [Guides for the Use of Environmental Marketing Claims, pursuant to Code of Federal Regulations, Title 16 Part 260](#).

*A product or package should not be marketed as recyclable unless it can be collected, separated, or otherwise recovered from the waste stream through an established recycling program for reuse or use in manufacturing or assembling another item.*

Further, § [260.14 \(PDF\)](#) provides the guidance for refillable claims:

*It is deceptive to misrepresent, directly or by implication, that a package is refillable. A marketer should not make an unqualified refillable claim unless the marketer provides the means for refilling the package. The marketer may either provide a system for the collection and refill of the package, or offer for sale a product that consumers can purchase to refill the original package.*

#### A.2 Canada

Likewise, in Canada, PR3's Reuse standards are designed to comply with the Competition Bureau Canada's [Environmental Claims: A Guide for Industry and Advertisers](#), aka 'Enforcement Guidelines' and the Consumer Packaging and Labeling Act. The Enforcement Guidelines state with regards to reusable and refillable claims ([10.12 Reusable and refillable](#)):

*A characteristic of a product or packaging that has been conceived and designed to accomplish within its life cycle a certain number of trips, rotations or uses for the same purpose for which it was conceived.*

The reusable statement in CAN/CSA-ISO 14021, Clause 7.12.1.1 also states:

*This claim deals primarily with the "product disposal" phase of the life cycle. Claims that deal with this phase are the most common in Canada at this time.*

*A product that claims to be reusable must have been designed specifically with the intent that it shall be reusable.*

### **A.3 European Union**

In the European Union, [Regulation \(EC\) No 94/62](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council on packaging and packaging waste, states the following code on reuse in [Article 5](#):

*In line with the waste hierarchy laid down in Article 4 of [Directive 2008/98/EC](#), Member States shall take measures to encourage the increase in the share of reusable packaging placed on the market and of systems to reuse packaging in an environmentally sound manner and in conformity with the Treaty, without compromising food hygiene or the safety of consumers.*



## Annex B (informative)

### Reuse symbol exploratory concept

#### B.1 The reuse rose

The reuse symbol: The Reuse Rose is a symbol of the joy we get from nature, which we have to protect and cultivate. It can be used as a symbol of our commitment to protect the environment. The shape of the design purposefully resembles a spiraling bowl alluding to the circular economy and its zero-waste containers.



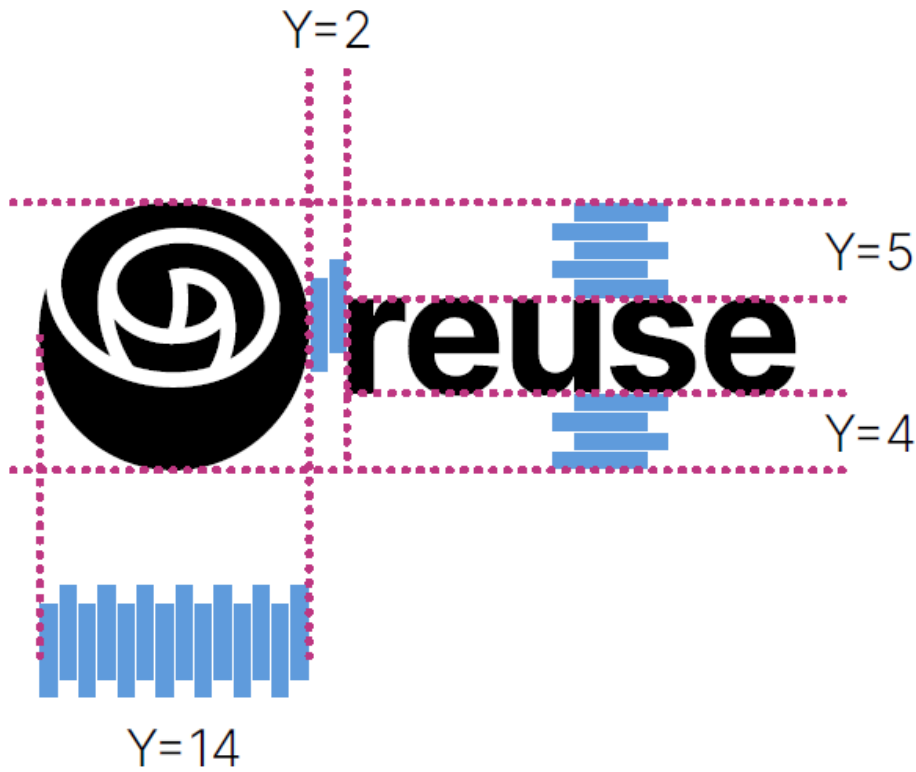
Symbol color variations: The base of the mark should be orange, black, or white. Suggested variations include dark and light backgrounds.

The reuse symbol and wordmark: The Reuse Rose can have the wordmark “reuse” added to it. The typeface for the “reuse” wordmark is: Inter Bold. Note that the wordmark is written with a lowercase r instead of a capital.

Lockup compositions: The Reuse Rose and wordmark can be locked up in various ways.

Symbol & Wordmark Lockup Spacing: **The Rose symbol has a certain amount of white space around it for the application of the wordmark.** We calculate the amount of white space between the word and the symbol by determining the width of the Rose as 14 parts of “Y”. The amount of 2 times “Y” results in the space between the wordmark and the symbol.

Further placement details of the wordmark can be derived from the guidelines shown here.



Lockup and symbol clearance: **A protected clear space**, determined by a quarter of the width of the symbol, designates the absolute minimum zone in which no other graphic element (text, line, shapes, image box, etc.) may appear.

It also indicates how close the logo can be to the edge of a page. This zone helps to avoid problems of legibility.

Consistent with these same considerations, the logo may exist at a size of no smaller than 3mm or 1/8 of an inch in height.

X=1



X=4

X=1



## Typography

Inter is offered as both traditional constant font files as well as a Variable Font. Inter is a typeface carefully crafted & designed for optimal legibility. The typeface features a tall x-height to aid in readability of mixedcase and lower-case text. Several OpenType features are provided as well, like contextual alternates.

### FONT:

Inter Bold & Inter Light  
tightly spaced at  $-0.025em$  (tracking -25)  
CSS “tracking-tight”

Download for free from  
<https://rsms.me/inter/>

Language support:

Inter supports many languages from around the world. Your language is most probably supported with this font, check

<https://rsms.me/inter/#languages>

Labeling examples: Examples of how brands may use the symbol on their containers and packaging.



## B.2 Other concepts

PR3 explored a number of concepts for a reuse symbol. Several examples are included below. The Reuse Rose (B.1) received the greatest share of positive and enthusiastic reactions and has thus been featured in this standard.

### B.2.1 New Again



### B.2.2 Regeneration



### B.2.3 The Reuse Butterfly



B.2.4 Others

