



THE VOICE OF FOOD RETAIL

Feeding Families  Enriching Lives

Care and Cleaning of Reusable Grocery Bags and Totes

Background

It is important to remind consumers of their important role in food safety given the increased use of reusable grocery bags and totes, as well as an increasing number of consumers choosing to reuse their plastic grocery bags. As of 2011, 89.5 percent of supermarkets are already offering reusable shopping bags as a merchandising option.¹

For food safety, as well as consumer and employee safety, FMI members are committed to taking a proactive approach to educating consumers on the steps that they can take to minimize the potential for cross-contamination when reusing grocery bags (both reusable and plastic) and totes.

Options for providing such information to consumers include, but are not limited to:

- Posting food safety messages at checkout
- Posting food safety messages and cleaning/care instructions at point of sale for reusable bags and totes
- Attaching tags with food safety messages and cleaning/care instructions to bags and totes
- Printing food safety messages and cleaning/care instructions on bags and totes

Messages

Messaging should take the form of both food safety messaging and care/cleaning instructions. The following examples are provided as options for consideration when developing company messaging and are not intended to be used in full or to the exclusion of other messages.

Examples:

- Always use a clean grocery bag (reusable, plastic or paper) or tote.
- Use dedicated totes and bags only for groceries.
- Follow washing instructions provided on reusable bags.
- Wash bags and totes regularly—whenever they are soiled or dirty
- Spot-clean reusable bags, plastic bags and totes using a clean cloth with warm soapy water, rinse with clean water and dry thoroughly before using or storing.
- Store bags and totes in a clean, dry location.
- Keep raw products like meat and poultry away from ready-to-eat foods.

“Be Food Safe” icons and messaging may also be used. See the “Be Food Safe” Platform Guidelines for use details at <http://www.befoodsafe.org/>.

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¹ Food Marketing Institute. *The Food Retailing Industry Speaks 2011*. pg. 20