



european association of  
steel drum manufacturers

# Life Expectancy of Steel Drums

## SEFA RECOMMENDATION

This recommendation has been developed by SEFA

## LIFE EXPECTANCY OF STEEL DRUMS

A shelf life **warranty** for steel drums **cannot be given** as **most of the determining factors are outside the control of the drum manufacturer.**

Not only the ways drums are handled, transported, filled, stored, emptied etc, but also the acceptance criteria / perception of drum buyers and drum users can vary significantly. And of course the nature of the filling product can significantly affect the life time after filling.

Notwithstanding the above, it is considered that a drum, **stored under cover, without substantial temperature variations and handled responsibly**, should remain suitable for its intended use for at least:

**Shelf life before filling:**     **1 to 3 months for plain drums**, the limitation being possible corrosion of the inside.

**1 to 3 years for internally lined drums**, limited by slow deterioration of the exterior.

**Shelf life after filling :**     **6 to 12 months for all drums** (see note below)

Note: Shelf life after filling assumes that the appropriate lining is selected for the filling product. Although 12 months should be no problem for most packed products in temperate climates, very aggressive products and / or severe (tropical) storage conditions can result in a considerable shorter life.

### Factors affecting the shelf life of empty drums

- Quality of external paint, screening inks, gaskets etc : *responsibility of drum manufacturer*
- Way empty drum is transported and handled : *responsibility of drum manufacturer and customer*
- Storage conditions and time : *responsibility of drum customer*

### Factors affecting the shelf life of filled drums

- Quality of external paint, screening inks, gaskets etc and for lined drums, also quality of the internal lining : *responsibility of drum manufacturer*
- Compatibility of filled product with the internal lining : *legal responsibility of filler but some drum manufacturers, like the Group, can give advice*
- Way drum is filled, handled and transported : *responsibility of drum filler / distributor / end user*  
Way filled drum is stored after delivery : *responsibility of end user*