

The Plastic Code



PETE



HDPE



PVC



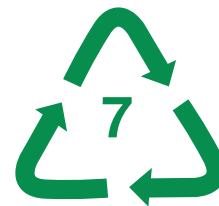
LDPE



PP



PS



Other



The Plastic Code

Puzzled by plastics? Many people are puzzled by which plastics can be recycled. Fortunately, The Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc. developed a coding system to help recyclers identify the types of plastic used in making bottles and other containers.

The code consists of a recycling triangle with a number in the center. Each number represents a different type of plastic. The letters sometimes found under the triangle abbreviate the name of the plastic. Generally, the coding symbol is imprinted on the bottom of a plastic container.

By law, plastic containers #1 through #7 are required to be recycled. Currently, a variance issued by the Department of Natural Resources allows plastic containers #3 through #7 to be landfilled or incinerated (at the time of this printing). If at some future time, the Department determines that adequate markets for these plastics exist, they will be banned from disposal. Some communities do accept plastic containers #3 through #7 in their basic curbside or drop-off program. Check with your local government or recycling center to find out which plastics are recyclable in your community.



PETE - polyethylene terephthalate

Common forms: two liter soft drink bottles, some jars

Recycled into: fiberfill, carpet backing, nonfood containers

Problems: high level pollutants inherent in manufacturing process, high probability of releasing noxious compounds during combustion

**Good recycling market*



HDPE - high density polyethylene

Common forms: milk and household soap bottles

Recycled into: "plastic lumber", piping, drain tiles, flower pots, some soap bottles

Problems: some pollutants inherent in manufacturing, noxious compounds released during combustion.

**Good recycling market*



PVC - polyvinyl chloride

Common forms: salad oil containers, clear film for packaging meat

Recycled into : limited to construction and auto industry plastics

Problems: high levels of pollutants inherent in manufacturing process, high probability of releasing noxious compounds during combustion

**Limited recycling market*



LDPE - low density polyethylene

Common forms: food packaging, shrink wrap, some plastic bags

Recycled into: plastic bags, landscape timbers on a very limited basis

Problems: same as HDPE

**Limited recycling market*



PP - polypropylene

Common forms: butter and margarine tubs, yogurt containers, screw-on caps and lids, drinking straws

Recycled into: mixed with PETE and HDPE for some of the products listed above on a limited basis

Problems: high level of pollutants in manufacturing process

**Limited recycling market*



PS - polystyrene foam - "styrofoam"

Common forms: cups, egg cartons, meat packing trays, plastic forks, spoons and knives

Recycled into: foam boards and food trays on a limited basis

Problems: some pollutants inherent in manufacturing process, recycling is not yet economical due to the high volume to weight ratio

**Limited recycling market*



Other

This category includes products which contain all other plastics, mixed plastics or multi-layer materials.