

RECYCLING NUMBERS & WHAT THEY MEAN



1 - PETE - POLYETHYLENE TEREPHTHALATE

- The easiest of plastics to recycle
 - Often used for soda bottles, water bottles and many common food packages
 - Is recycled into bottles and polyester fibers
- PET plastic is the most common for single-use bottled beverages, because it is inexpensive, lightweight and easy to recycle
 - It poses low risk of leaching breakdown products
 - Recycling rates remain relatively low (around 20%), though the material is in high demand by remanufacturers.

2 - HDPE - HIGH DENSITY POLYETHYLENE

- Also readily recyclable
- Mostly used for packaging detergents, bleach, milk containers, hair care products and motor oil.
- Is recycled into more bottles or bags
- HDPE is a versatile plastic with many uses, especially for packaging
- It carries low risk of leaching and is readily recyclable into many goods



3 - PVC - POLYVINYL CHLORIDE

- Very common
 - Pipes, toys, furniture, packaging - you name it.
 - Difficult to recycle
- PVC is a major environmental and health threat
 - PVC is tough and weathers well, so it is commonly used for piping, siding and similar applications
 - PVC contains chlorine, so its manufacture can release highly dangerous dioxins
 - If you must cook with PVC, don't let the plastic touch food
 - Never burn PVC, because it releases toxins

4 - LDPE LOW-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE

- Used for many different kinds of wrapping, grocery bags and sandwich bags
- Can be recycled into more of the same
- LDPE is a flexible plastic with many applications
- Historically it has not been accepted through most American curbside recycling programs, but more and more communities are starting to accept it



5 - PP - POLYPROPYLENE

- Clothing, bottles, tubs
- Can be recycled into fibers
- Polypropylene has a high melting point, and so is often chosen for containers that must accept hot liquid
- It is gradually becoming more accepted by recyclers

6 - PS - POLYSTYRENE

- Cups, foam food trays, packing peanuts.






- Polystyrene is a real problem as it's bulky yet very lightweight and that makes it difficult to recycle
- It can however be reused
- Polystyrene can be made into rigid or foam products -- in the latter case it is popularly known as the trademark Styrofoam.
- Evidence suggests polystyrene can leach potential toxins into foods.
- The material was long on environmentalists' hit lists for dispersing widely across the landscape, and for being notoriously difficult to recycle
- Most places still don't accept it, though it is gradually gaining traction

7 – OTHER

- Could be a mixture of any and all of the above
- Plastics not readily recyclable such as polyurethane
- Avoid it if you can - recyclers generally speaking don't want it
- Bioplastics are also labeled at "7-Other"



The Society of Plastics Industry resin categories are intended to indicate resin content for the purpose of facilitating recycling and sorting efforts. They were never intended to be, and are not, an indicator of product safety. It is incorrect to assume that because a container is marked "7-Other", the article is made of a particular material or includes a particular chemical such as Bisphenol A (BPA), because a number of different resins with different properties and composition, fall within the catch-all category of "7-OTHER".

Recycling Number	Polymer Name & Abbreviation	Common Uses	Recycling Information
 1 PETE	Polyethylene Terephthalate PETE or PET	Used for most clear beverage, food bottles and containers.	Recycled into polyester fibers, thermo-formed sheeting, strapping, soft drink bottles.
 2 HDPE	High Density Polyethylene HDPE	Used for milk jugs as well as beverage and food bottles and containers; dish and laundry detergent bottles; and grocery, trash and retail bags.	Recycled into various bottles, grocery bags, recycling bins, agricultural pipe, playground equipment and plastic lumber.
 3 V	Polyvinyl Chloride PVC or V	Used for packaging.	Recycled into pipe, fencing and non-food bottles.
 4 LDPE	Low Density Polyethylene LDPE	Used in dry cleaning, bread and frozen food bags, compact disc jackets and squeezable bottles.	Recycled into plastic bags, various containers, dispensing bottles, wash bottles and tubing.
 5 PP	Polypropylene PP	Used in rigid food, medicine containers and bottles.	Recycled into auto parts and industrial fibers.
 6 PS	Polystyrene PS	Used in cups, plates, cutlery, packaging peanuts, egg cartons, meat and bakery trays, and take-out containers. Polystyrene is also known as Styrofoam.	Extruded polystyrene and expanded foam is not recyclable.
 7 OTHER	Usually Polycarbonate Other	Used in reusable water bottles and beverage and food bottles.	Corn and organic-based plastics called PLA (Polylactic Acid) are not recyclable. Some #7s are recyclable.

SOURCES

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