



Recycling symbols & what they mean?

A handy reference guide



What Does It Mean?



Glass Recycling

This recycling symbol indicates that a glass product can be recycled if placed into a glass recycling bottle bank, once it has been washed.



The Green Dot

This is a European trademark that producers and suppliers include on their packaging advising consumers that they have contributed financially to the recycling of the products packaging. **It does not mean that all packaging supplied is recyclable.**



Aluminium Recycling

This recycling symbol indicates that aluminium packaging can be recycled.



Steel Recycling

This recycling symbol indicates that steel can be recycled.



Paper Recycling

This recycling symbol indicates that paper packaging can be recycled.

What Does It Mean?



Mobius Loop

This recycling symbol indicates that the products packaging can be recycled. **It does not automatically mean it is accepted in all recycling collection systems.** Sometimes this is used with a x% figure in the middle which is used to denote that the packaging contains x% of recyclable material.



Tidyman

Dispose of this carefully and thoughtfully. Do not litter.



Non-household waste

The crossed-out wheeled bin symbol indicates that the item should be disposed of separately from household waste. The item should be handed in for recycling in accordance with local environmental regulations for waste disposal.

By separating a marked item from household waste, you will help reduce the volume of waste sent to incinerators or land-fill and minimise any potential negative impact on human health or the environment.

What Does It Mean?



Plastic Recycling

The symbol above may contain a number which can be used to identify different types of plastic. We accept **PET (soft drinks bottles – denoted by the number 1 within the triangle)** and **HDPE (i.e. detergent, shampoo and shower gel bottles – denoted by the number 2 within the triangle)**.

We also take clean **PP (margarine and yogurt containers – denoted by the number 5 within the triangle)**.

(See opposite page for an explanation of the various numbers)

Plastics by the Numbers



The well-recognized “chasing arrows” symbol we see on plastic containers and products does not guarantee that the product is recyclable. **The little number inside the triangle tells the real story.**

Within each chasing arrows triangle, there is a number which ranges from **one to seven**. The purpose of the number is to identify the type of plastic used for the product, and **not all plastics are recyclable or even reusable**. There are numerous plastic-based products that cannot break down and cannot be recycled.

Understanding the seven plastic codes will make it easier to know which plastics can be recycled.

#1 – PET (Polyethylene Terephthalate)

PET is one of the most commonly used plastics in consumer products, and is found in most water and drinks bottles, and some packaging. It is intended for single use applications; repeated use increases the risk of leaching and bacterial growth. PET plastic is difficult to decontaminate, and proper cleaning requires harmful chemicals. PET plastic is recyclable. The plastic is crushed and then shredded into small flakes which are then reprocessed to make new PET bottles, or spun into polyester fiber. This recycled fiber is used to make textiles such as fleece garments, carpets, stuffing for pillows and life jackets, and similar products.

Products made of #1 (PET) plastic can be recycled but not reused.

#2 – HDPE (High-Density Polyethylene)

HDPE plastic is the stiff plastic used to make milk jugs, detergent and oil bottles, toys, and some plastic bags. HDPE is the most commonly recycled plastic and is considered one of the safest forms of plastic. It is a relatively simple and cost-effective process to recycle HDPE plastic for secondary use.

HDPE plastic is very hard-wearing and does not break down under exposure to sunlight or extremes of heating or freezing. For this reason, HDPE is used to make picnic tables, plastic lumber, waste bins, park benches, bed liners for trucks and other products which require durability and weather-resistance.

Products made of HDPE are reusable and recyclable.

Plastics by the Numbers

#3 – PVC (Polyvinyl Chloride)

PVC is a soft, flexible plastic used to make clear plastic food wrapping, cooking oil bottles, teething rings, children's and pets' toys, and blister packaging for myriad consumer products. It is commonly used as the sheathing material for computer cables, and to make plastic pipes and parts for plumbing. Because PVC is relatively impervious to sunlight and weather, it is used to make window frames, garden hoses, raised beds and trellises.

PVC is dubbed the “poison plastic” because it contains numerous toxins which it can leach throughout its entire life cycle. Almost all products using PVC require virgin material for their construction; less than 1% of PVC material is recycled.

Products made using PVC plastic are not recyclable. While some PCV products can be repurposed, PVC products should not be reused for applications with food or for children's use.

#4 – LDPE (Low-Density Polyethylene)

LDPE is often found in shrink wraps, dry cleaner garment bags, squeezable bottles, and the type of plastic bags used to package bread. The plastic grocery bags used in most stores today are made using LDPE plastic. Some clothing and furniture also uses this type of plastic.

Products made using LDPE plastic are reusable, but not recyclable.

#5 – PP (Polypropylene)

Polypropylene plastic is tough and lightweight, and has excellent heat-resistance qualities. It serves as a barrier against moisture, grease and chemicals. When you try to open the thin plastic liner in a cereal box, it is polypropylene. This keeps your cereal dry and fresh. PP is also commonly used for margarine and yogurt containers.

Products made of PP are reusable and recyclable.

Plastics by the Numbers

#6 – PS (Polystyrene)

Polystyrene is an inexpensive, lightweight and easily-formed plastic with a wide variety of uses. It is most often used to make disposable styrofoam drinking cups, take-out “clamshell” food containers, egg cartons, plastic picnic cutlery, foam packaging and those ubiquitous “peanut” foam chips used to fill shipping boxes to protect the contents. Polystyrene is also widely used to make rigid foam insulation and underlay sheeting for laminate flooring used in home construction.

Because polystyrene is structurally weak and ultra-lightweight, it breaks up easily and is dispersed readily throughout the natural environment. Beaches all over the world have bits of polystyrene lapping at the shores, and an untold number of marine species have ingested this plastic with immeasurable consequences to their health.

Polystyrene may leach styrene, a possible human carcinogen, into food products (especially when heated in a microwave). Chemicals present in polystyrene have been linked with human health and reproductive system dysfunction.

Recycling is not widely available for polystyrene products. Most curbside collection services will not accept polystyrene, which is why this material accounts for about 35% of US landfill material. While the technology for recycling polystyrene is available, the market for recycling is small. Awareness among consumers has grown, however, and polystyrene is being reused more often.

Polystyrene cannot be recycled and should be avoided where possible.

#7 – Other (BPA, Polycarbonate and LEXAN)

The #7 category was designed as a catch-all for polycarbonate (PC) and “other” plastics, so reuse and recycling protocols are not standardized within this category.

Number 7 plastics are used to make baby bottles, sippy cups, water cooler bottles and car parts. BPA is found in polycarbonate plastic food containers often marked on the bottom with the letters “PC” by the recycling label #7.

When possible it is best to avoid #7 plastics, especially for children’s food. PLA compostable plastics are not recyclable.

the city bin cº

