

# RECYCLING PLASTICS IS AS EASY AS ... 1, 2, 3 (4, 5, 6, 7)!

The numbers shown inside the chasing arrows refer to different types of plastics used in making plastic products and containers.



The numbering system is based on a voluntary plastic guide developed by the Society of The Plastics Industry (SPI). Presently, SPI is working to improve the numbering system to make it easier for you to know what to recycle.

## What Do The Numbers Mean?

**PET** (Polyethylene terephthalate)



PET is used in the production of soft drink bottles, peanut butter jars...

PET can be recycled into fiberfill for sleeping bags, carpet fibers, rope, pillows...

**HDPE** (High density polyethylene)



HDPE is found in milk jugs, butter tubs, detergent bottles, motor oil bottles...

HDPE can be recycled into flower pots, trash cans, traffic barrier cones, detergent bottles...

**V** (Polyvinyl chloride)



PVC is used in shampoo bottles, cooking oil bottles, fast food service items...

PVC can be recycled into drainage and irrigation pipes...

**LDPE** (Low density polyethylene)



LDPE is found in grocery bags, bread bags, shrink wrap, margarine tub tops...

LDPE can be recycled into new grocery bags...

**PP** (Polypropylene)



PP is used in most yogurt containers, straws, pancake syrup bottles, bottle caps....

PP can be recycled into plastic lumber, car battery cases, manhole steps...

**PS** (Polystyrene)



PS is found in disposable hot cups, packaging materials (peanuts), and meat trays...

PS can be recycled into plastic lumber, cassette tape boxes, flower pots...

**OTHER**



This is usually a mixture of various plastics, like squeeze ketchup bottles, "microwaveable" dishes...

Other (number 7) is usually not recycled because it is a mixture of different types of plastics.

## How Plastics Are Made...

There are two methods for making plastic containers, **blow-molding** and **injection molding**. Blow-molding produces necked bottles (shampoo bottles) while injection molding produces tubs (margarine tubs).

Your recycling program may be based on the number system or on how the plastic was made. Check with your local recycling coordinator to find out which types of plastics are recyclable in your community. **Please be sure to recycle only those plastics collected in your recycling program! Most recycling programs accept only numbers 1 & 2 with necks!**



Not all plastic consumer goods are identified by code numbers. Some plastic products simply do not fit into the numbering system that identifies plastics used in consumer containers. There are actually thousands of different varieties of plastic resins or mixtures of resins that are developed to suit the needs of particular products.

### Gee Wiz Plastic Facts

- All plastic starts out as petroleum!
- Five PET bottles yield enough fiber for one extra-large T-shirt or one square foot of carpet. About 1,200 soda bottles could carpet the average living room. (Half of all polyester carpet manufactured in the United States is made from recycled plastic bottles.)
- Twenty-five two-liter bottles can make one sweater.
- Five two-liter PET bottles yield enough fiberfill for a ski jacket.
- It takes 35 two-liter PET bottles to make enough fiberfill for a sleeping bag.
- Plastic makes up eight percent of our trash by weight, but is 24 percent of the volume.
- Plastic bottles will take over 500 years to decompose.

### Remember...

Look for plastic containers that can be recycled in your communities recycling program. Call your local recycling coordinator for more information. If you can't find your local recycling coordinator's number, contact us.

### Write or call us:

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation  
Division of Solid & Hazardous Materials  
Bureau of Solid Waste Reduction & Recycling  
625 Broadway  
Albany, New York 12233-7253  
(518) 402-8704

### or email us at:

[dshmwrr@gw.dec.state.ny.us](mailto:dshmwrr@gw.dec.state.ny.us)

### and check out our web page at:

[www.dec.ny.gov](http://www.dec.ny.gov)

Send us your ideas and suggestions,  
we would like to hear from you!



New York State Department  
of Environmental Conservation

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