



Consumer Guide to Recycling Codes

Those tiny recycling symbols stamped on products hold the key to understanding recycling. The next time you see one of these symbols, use the following guide to ensure that the product is recycled or disposed of properly.



Plastic

The recycling codes for plastics are divided into seven categories. Generally, the higher the number, the more difficult it is for the material to be recycled.



Polyethylene terephthalate (PET or PETE):

A very common, easy to recycle type of plastic, accepted by most municipal recycling programs. It's commonly found in disposable food and drink containers, including water and soda bottles, and prepared- and frozen-food containers.



High-density polyethylene (HDPE):

A non-transparent plastic, also widely accepted in municipal recycling programs. It's commonly found in household cleaner bottles, some food containers, and cutting boards.



Polyvinyl chloride (PVC):

PVC is more difficult to recycle than PET 1 and HDPE 2. This type of plastic can be found in children's toys and a variety of bottles, including detergent and shampoo.



Low-density polyethylene (LDPE):

A soft, flexible type of plastic that is commonly used to make thin plastic bags. Check to make sure it's accepted locally, as it can clog up recycling machines. Often grocery stores will accept LDPE products.



Polypropylene (PP):

PP plastic can be found in straws, soft-drink cups, and certain food containers. PP plastic can be recycled, but check to make sure it's accepted locally.



Polystyrene (PS):

PS plastic is also known as styrofoam. It's commonly found in takeout containers and disposable cups. It is generally not accepted within recycling programs.



Other:

These include bisphenol A (BPA), polycarbonate, and bio-based plastics.

Glass



This recycling symbol indicates that clean glass products can be recycled. There are three recycling codes for glass products:



Mixed Glass



Clear Glass



Green Glass

Paper



This recycling symbol shows that the paper cardboard is certified to have been made with at least 75% genuine waste paper, board fiber, or a mix of both. There are three paper recycling codes:



Cardboard



Plain Paper



Mixed Paper