

TIPS FOR HOUSEHOLDERS

Which plastics can be Recycled in Wollongong?

You can recycle plastic bottles and containers with symbols below. Generally you can find the number displayed inside a recycling triangle on the bottom of a container. However, some containers do not always have numbers displayed such as PET 1.

- Code 1, PET (eg, soft drink bottles)
- Code 2, HDPE (eg, milk and juice bottles)
- Code 3, V (eg, strawberry punnets)
- Code 4, LDPE (eg, ice-cream lids)
- Code 5, PP (eg, ice-cream containers)
- Code 6, PS (eg, yoghurt containers)



You need to place recyclables in your yellow-topped recycling bin, which is collected fortnightly for residents. Please do not put plastic bags in the recycling bin. You can return plastic bags to those supermarkets that collect them for recycling. For more information, consult *Your Guide to Being Waste Wise* http://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/documents/Your_Guide_to_being_Waste_Wise.pdf

Preparation of plastics before Recycling

- 1 Remove lids or caps from bottles and place separately in your recycling bin.
- 2 Wash and squash bottles.

Recycling Process

- 1 All recycling is taken to the Materials Recycling Facility at Kembla Grange run by PAR. Plastic sent for recycling must first be sorted and separated into polymer types (numbers/codes).
- 2 The recycling codes help contractors to sort materials. Plastics are hand-sorted from a conveyor belt into large containers. Bales of different types of plastics are then transported to factories for reprocessing.
 - a. Large contaminants are removed manually
 - b. The plastics are either shredded, chopped or ground and then washed to remove further contaminants
 - c. The material formed into pellets is ready for remaking into new plastic products.

How much Plastic does Wollongong Recycle?

A Waste composition audit* of Wollongong City Council's recycling bins in 2008 found that 4.5% of the 240L bin (by weight) was plastic. The largest constituent was paper, followed by glass. Australians use more than 1.3 million tonnes of plastic every year – more than 71 kg for every person. Most plastics can be recycled, but due to the difficulty in collecting, sorting, cleaning and reprocessing, at present it is only economically viable to recycle plastic bottles and containers numbered 1 - 6.

Positive Environmental Effects of Recycling Plastics

- Recycling one tonne of plastics saves enough energy to run a refrigerator for a month
- Every time you recycle 41 plastic bottles, enough energy is saved to run a refrigerator for one hour.

Some Uses for Plastics and Recycled Plastics in Australia

Code 1, PET

Name of plastic: Polyethylene terephthalate PET

Description: Clear tough plastic, may be used as a fibre

Some uses for virgin plastic: Soft drink and mineral water bottles.

Some uses for plastic made from recycled waste plastic: Soft drink bottles, (multi-layer) detergent bottles, clear film for packaging, carpet fibres, fleecy jackets.

Code 2, HDPE

Name of plastic: High density polyethylene HDPE

Description: Very common plastic, usually white or coloured.

Some uses for virgin plastic: Milk and cream bottles, bottles for shampoo and cleaners, milk crates.

Some uses for plastic made from recycled waste plastic: Compost bins, detergent bottles, crates, mobile garbage bins, agricultural pipes, pallets, kerbside recycling crates.

Code 3, V

Name of plastic: Unplasticised polyvinyl chloride UPVC

Description: Hard rigid plastic, may be clear. Some uses for virgin plastic: Clear cordial and juice bottles, plumbing pipes and fittings

Some uses for plastic made from recycled waste plastic: Detergent bottles, tiles, plumbing pipe fittings.

Code 3,V

Name of plastic: Plasticised polyvinyl chloride PPVC

Description: Flexible, clear, elastic plastic

Some uses for virgin plastic: Garden hose, shoe soles, blood bags and tubing.

Some uses for plastic made from recycled waste plastic: Hose inner core, industrial flooring.

Code 4, LDPE

Name of plastic: Low density polyethylene LDPE

Description: Soft, flexible plastic.

Some uses for virgin plastic: Lids of ice-cream containers, garbage bins.

Some uses for plastic made from recycled waste plastic: Film for builders, industry, packaging and plant nurseries, bags.

Code 5, PP

Name of plastic: Polypropylene PP

Description: Hard, but flexible plastic - many uses

Some uses for virgin plastic: Ice-cream containers, drinking straws, hinged lunch boxes.

Some uses for plastic made from recycled waste plastic: Compost bins, kerbside recycling crates, worm factories.

Code 6, PS

Name of plastic: Polystyrene PS

Description: Rigid, brittle plastic. May be clear, glassy

Some uses for virgin plastic: Yoghurt containers, plastic cutlery, imitation crystal 'glassware'.

Some uses for plastic made from recycled waste plastic: Clothes pegs, coat hangers, office accessories, spools, rulers, video/CD boxes.

Code 6, PS

Name of plastic: Expanded polystyrene EPS

Description: Foamed, lightweight, energy absorbing, thermal insulation.

Some uses for virgin plastic: Hot drink cups, takeaway food containers, meat trays, packaging.

Sources

- Visy recycling website www.visyrecycling.com.au;
- *APC environmental management, Waste audit results for Wollongong City Council, 2008.

Disclaimers

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