Recycle at Work PLASTICS

Plastic is derived from petroleum. Nearly 10 percent of U.S. oil consumption is used to make plastics, equaling about 2 million barrels a day. Recycling plastics uses roughly 10 percent of the energy needed to make a pound of plastic from virgin materials.

Water bottles now refundable

Water bottles are now refundable. Beginning in 2009, the Oregon Bottle Bill expanded to include requiring a 5 cent deposit on water bottles.

Plastics in the recycling system

In addition to bottles, plastic tubs such as yogurt tubs and cottage cheese containers are collected in curbside roll carts in all jurisdictions in the Metro region. The plastic items included for curbside pickup are those that have the best market value. Plastic lids are excluded from collection to avoid mixing them in with paper bound for the mills.

Plastic recycling options

There are recycling options for plastics not included in the curbside recycling program. Call Metro Recycling Information at 503-234-3000, or visit the web site www.oregonmetro.gov/findrecycler.

Products made from recycled plastic

- Fiberfill for jackets and sleeping bags
- Carpet
- Outdoor furniture
- Play structures
- Marine and automotive parts
- Lumber, pallets and ropes

continued

For more information

Visit www.RecycleAtWork.com **or call Metro Recycling Information at 503-234-3000.**

Fact sheets were created by Metro and your local governments to help reduce waste in the business sector. Printed on recycled paper. 09150

Metro

Recycle at Work
from Metro and your local governments

What the numbers and symbols mean

The plastics industry devised a numbering system to categorize plastic among seven general types. The number on the bottom of the container indicates the type of plastic it's made from. Different types of plastic are made using different dyes, plasticizers, UV inhibitors, softeners and other chemicals. As a result, each plastic container must be separated by type before it can be reused to make a new product.

The easiest and most common plastics to recycle are made of polyethylene terephthalate. The plastics most difficult to recycle are those made from polystyrene – No. 6 – and plastics printed with a "7" on the bottom or no number at all. Most to-go containers are made of polystyrene, for example, and there is currently no market for this material.

Many plastic containers also include the common recycling symbol – a set of chasing arrows – but this does not guarantee the product's acceptance by local programs.

	CHEMICAL NAME	COMMON USES
1 PET	Polyethylene terephthalate (PET)	Soft drink and medicine bottles, carpet fiber, fleece
2 HOPE	High-density polyethylene (HDPE)	Milk, water, shampoo and motor-oil bottles, plastic lumber
3 PVC	Polyvinyl chloride (PVC)	Pipe, decking, flooring
4 LDPE	Low-density polyethylene (LDPE)	Film (plastic bags and wrap), furniture
5 PP	Polypropylene	Syrup bottles, yogurt tubs, auto parts
6 PS	(PP), Polystyrene and expanded polystyrene (PS)	Coffee cups, takeout containers, reusable consumer productss
7 OTHER	Polycarbonate	Storage containers, electronics, plastic lumber

Sources

Eco-Justice Collaborative

American Chemistry