

Recycle-News-Haven

The NHSWRA Newsletter

information on solid waste and recycling
of concern to the New Haven CT community

Life of Materials **Single Use Plastic**



Are you ready for a deeper dive into
where most of your take-out containers
and cups *could* go, in a perfect world?
Okay, take a deep breath!

Single use plastic is a term for the *purpose* of certain plastic items, made from different types and blends of plastic; it is not actually a “material.” That being said, it is a significant segment of recycling, especially in these times, when such things as cups, bowls, plates and utensils are being used more than ever due to antiseptic considerations in the Pandemic.

There are two broad categories of plastic resins that are represented here:

Polystyrene (eating utensils, foam cups, bowls and molded packing materials (styrofoam or “expanded” polystyrene), and

Polypropylene (plastic cups and clam shell takeout food containers)

Breaking it down further – Both Polypropylene and “rigid” polystyrene, which produce cups and clam shell containers, *are* recyclable in your blue bin for mixed recyclables (as long as these items are residue-free, and the cups do NOT include straws or lids). Phew - glad we cleared that up!

That leaves the rest of it. Foam and Expanded Polystyrene products (EPS) are not generally accepted in most recycling streams, and definitely not in your blue bins or at the New Haven Transfer Station. That's because EPS, in particular, consumer and packing foam, is low density and doesn't weigh much at all, which makes it unsuitable for automated sorting at most Materials Reduction Facilities (MRF's), where your curbside recycling ends up. So even though these items are technically recyclable, in Connecticut they should go in your regular trash. However, if you wish to go the extra mile (literally) to recycle your foam, contact Polyfoam Corporation, 60 Glen Road, Cranston, RI 02920, (401) 781-3220.

Typically, foam, if recycled, is only good for one more cycle in the use chain. After processing, it's no longer expandable or foam-like. Instead, it gets converted into hard plastic for things like picture frames and synthetic lumber. More capabilities are being developed, however: several Canadian companies are using new technology that chemically breaks down foam so it can be reformed as..... yup, foam! This process can be repeated at only 10% loss, so is considered sustainable, and yes, it is competitive with “virgin” styrofoam in price and purity.

On the other end of it, foam use is being reduced at the source – such companies as Dunkin' have decided against it and gone to paper cups (which – surprisingly – still have about 5% plastic in them so they are not recyclable practically, either!)

Things get tricky, right? We still have rigid polystyrene (like your “solo” plastic cups) and polypropylene, which can definitely be recycled. Rigid Polystyrene is benefiting from new chemical recycling processes as well as is foam, and the technology is improving in the U.S. When broken down, it can be recovered at a rate of 70% and the most current technology is able to use almost all of the resultant polymer, which is considered as good as virgin material. Not only that, the carbon footprint is considerably less than that from producing virgin product! However, though there is no shortage of 'feedstock' (sorted recyclable material), problems arise due to the time and money involved in collecting it.



Check out a typical path of foam in this [video](#)

Well that sounds good, right?! Yes, there is a lot of potential and capability for sustainability in *theory*, but we are far from a real solution. Ninety-one percent of plastic (half of which is single use) is not recycled, but instead ends up in landfills or is burned. Much more ends up as virtually uncollectable

micro-plastic in vast ocean trash-patches, showing up in the food chain. And crude oil prices will continue to stay low, due to the Pandemic, which means that a lot more virgin plastic will be created in the next few years. Also, the chemical recycling processes described above are only just beginning to be utilized. Plastic is cheap and convenient. So single use plastic is not going away anytime soon. And that is literally true: Polystyrene in particular takes 500 years to biodegrade!

What needs to be done to bring theory closer to reality for single use plastic recycling? On the manufacturing side, less variations in the production process and in the compounds themselves would enable more goods to be acceptable for reprocessing. And advanced sorting technology would help on the collecting end. But right now, much of the answer still lies in reducing use, and consumer choice. You can certainly start to help by using less of those take-out containers, utensils and cups; simply let your food service know when you don't need these items since you will be dining at home.



Where to Put? Fire Extinguishers



Consumer fire extinguishers are considered “expired” if they are more than 6 years old, or by the date given by the manufacturer. If your fire extinguisher is non-rechargeable, it must be disposed of after one use.

How to prepare for disposal:

1. The attached gauge is not always accurate, so even if it reads “0,” activate the unit to expel any remaining fire retardant safely (outside in low or no wind. Stand upwind from the unit)
2. Let sit for a couple of days and recheck for remaining retardant and expel
3. Remove the flange at the top of the canister once you are sure that all retardant has been expelled and there is no residual pressure.

4. If canister is metal, bring to scrap metal yard or metal drop-off at the New Haven Transfer Station to be recycled.
5. If canister is plastic, dispose of in regular trash
6. Hose and other minor parts can also go in regular trash



APP-solutely! Apps For You

below are some search engines that can help you find a home for your unwanted items. Just copy and paste into your URL line. Happy hunting!

<https://www.RecycleCT.com/> (waste wizard)

What it does: Provides general instructions for disposal: Types of locations and how to.

How to use: Enter the item in question. If you do not see it represented, look in the suggestions in the drop-down box.

<https://www.nhswra.com>
(NHSWRA waste wizard for New Haven area)

What it does: Provides specific drop-off sites and instructions if you are a resident of New Haven.

How to use: Located toward bottom of the Home Page. Enter item in question or look it up in the alphabetized list below the entry box. Provides specific drop-off sites and instructions if you are a resident of New Haven.

<https://www.plasticfilmrecycling.org/recycling-bags-and-wraps/find-drop-off-location>

(American Chemistry Council)

What it does: plastic bag drop-off locator by zip code

How to use: Closest drop-off points are listed first. Call the listing in the results for your area before you travel.

https://search.earth911.com/?what=plastic+film&where=06405&list_filter=all&max_distance=2&family_id=&latitude=&longitude=&country=&province=&city=&sponsor=

(Earth 911)

What it does: General locator by item and zip code. This is handy if you have an item that is not listed in other directories yet, and includes commercial as well as municipal drop-offs.

How to use: Just type in your item in the first space provided and zip code in the second.



Resources

Notice: The New Haven Transfer station will be closed on Monday, 2/15, in honor of Presidents Day.

City of New Haven meeting schedule:

<https://newhaven-ct.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>

New Haven Public Works info:

Resident Services:

The office at 34 Middletown Avenue is open to the public Monday through Friday from 7am - 4pm. Public Works wants to ensure that everyone stays safe by requiring residents to wear a mask and practice social distancing. One resident at a time will be allowed in the office so allow extra time for service.

Bulk Appointments and free Residential Waste coupons are issued from the Resident Services Office. To schedule Bulk Appointments, please call (203) 946-7700 first to confirm that there are appointments available in your neighborhood. When picking up coupons, residents should have their ID with New Haven address ready to present when they enter the Public Works office. Note that beginning in February, only valid coupons will be accepted to use the Residential Waste Center at the Transfer Station, 260 Middletown Avenue, Monday – Saturday 9 am – 12 pm.

They are experiencing heavy call volume on the ‘7700’ line so they ask that you be patient and leave a clear, detailed message with your phone number and someone will get back to you as soon as they are able. Remember too you can always report Public Works issues at **See Click Fix** found on New Haven City website (see “Links,” next page).

 Resources (cont'd.)

On the Public Works Calendar:

Public Works offices will be closed on February 15, Presidents' Day. Trash/Recycling collections will be one day later all that week.

Links:

'What's New' page- https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/whats_new_.htm

New Haven Public Works- <https://www.newhavenct.gov/gov/depts/pw/>

See Click Fix- <https://seeclickfix.com/new-haven>

NHSWRA link and contact info:



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