

COMMON SOURCES OF MICROPLASTICS

Microplastics are tiny bits of plastic about the size of a pencil eraser (5mm or less). Sometimes they're so small we can't see them easily with our eyes.

We can help reduce their presence in the environment by using less plastic, throwing away our trash and identifying eco-friendly alternatives to plastic.

TO SCALE!



FRAGMENTS

Result from the break up of larger rigid plastics, may become brittle over time due to weathering



FILMS

Flexible pieces of plastic bags and wrappers, may become brittle over time due to weathering



TIRE DUST

By mass, tire dust may represent more than 70% of all microplastics in the ocean



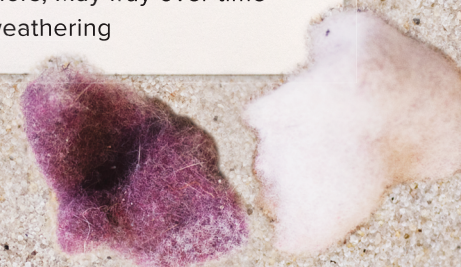
FOAMS

Pieces of expanded or extruded polystyrene Sources include foam coffee cups, takeout containers, dock flotation, among others, Generally soft texture but may also be brittle



FIBERS

Plastic fibers from synthetic clothing and synthetic ropes of many colors, May fray over time due to weathering



PELLETS (NURDLES)

Used in the production of plastic products. Usually have a round, smooth, manufactured appearance and feel



MICROBEADS

Added to some personal care products, over-the-counter drugs and biomedical research. Now banned in certain personal care products in the U.S. and some other countries Cape Cod



CAPE COD TRASH TOTE

FIELD GUIDE TO PLASTIC IDENTIFICATION



COMMON TYPES OF PLASTICS

There are thousands of different plastics, each with its own composition and characteristics.

Plastic products can generally be grouped into seven categories, indicated on the product by a **number (1 to 7) inside a triangle**. The triangle (sometimes called a recycling symbol) doesn't mean a product is recyclable. The number tells us what type of plastic was used to make the product and can help you figure out how to dispose of it properly.

Not sure if something is recyclable? Use the search engine at www.RecycleSmartMA.org to find out!

REDUCE AND REUSE FIRST. THEN RECYCLE.

1 Polyethylene terephthalate

**PETE
PET**

Clear, smooth, and flexible.
Examples: Water bottles, salad dressing, peanut butter jars, clothing fiber

EASILY RECYCLED



2 High density polyethylene

HDPE

Hard, opaque.
Examples: juice and milk jugs, household cleaner jugs.

EASILY RECYCLED



4 Low density polyethylene

LDPE

Soft, flexible.
Examples: bread bags, garbage bags, cling wrap, six pack rings

GENERALLY NOT ACCEPTED IN MUNICIPAL RECYCLING

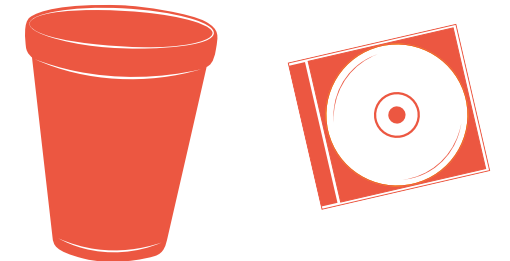


6 Polystyrene & Expanded polystyrene

PS

Clear, glassy, rigid, brittle.
Also expanded foam.
Examples: Styrofoam coffee cups, coolers, packing peanuts, CD cases

**SOME RIGID PS IS RECYCLABLE
EXPANDED PS NOT ACCEPTED IN MUNICIPAL RECYCLING**



3 Polyvinyl chloride

PVC

Flexible, clear (plasticized); hard, rigid (unplasticized).
Examples: plastic tubing, kids toys, plastic trays.

GENERALLY NOT ACCEPTED IN MUNICIPAL RECYCLING



5 Polypropylene

PP

Hard, flexible.
Examples: yogurt containers, straws, bottle caps.

SOME ITEMS ARE ACCEPTED IN MUNICIPAL RECYCLING



7 Mixed plastics and bioplastics (polylactic acid)

**MIXED
OTHER**

Plastic: Clear, hard, shatterproof.
Examples: acrylic plastic, polycarbonate plastic, polylactic fibers, nylon, fiberglass, and rope.

NOT ACCEPTED IN MUNICIPAL RECYCLING

