



Plastics Recycling Outreach Terms

Better Communication...Better Recycling.

A project managed by



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Plastics Division

Plastics Recycling Outreach Terms

This resource provides a common set of terminology to help streamline communications for community recycling programs throughout the U.S. and Canada. Its goals are to strengthen consumer education and increase the quantity and quality of plastics recycled.

What are the Terms?

The Plastics Recycling Terms contain a common set of terms for all community recycling programs in North America to use when communicating about plastics recycling. The Terms address (nearly) all the types of plastics that are collected for recycling and are designed to help communities increase the quality and quantity of plastics collected.

Who created the Terms?

To create the Terms, Moore Recycling Associates worked with Re-TRAC Connect, plus a wide-ranging Advisory Committee that includes representatives from throughout the recycling value chain, including plastics reclaimers, recycling/trade associations, MRFs, a recycling company, an exporter, plastics makers, and a non-profit curbside recycling partnership. In addition, Moore Recycling solicited input through an extensive survey of hundreds of recycling professionals and through Re-TRAC Connect.

Moore Recycling Associates oversees the Terms, sponsored by the American Chemistry Council's Plastics Division.

Why Every Community Should Use the Terms

Recycling professionals need a common set of terms to better communicate with community residents, each other, and everyone in the plastics recycling value chain.

The terms in use today are, at best, inconsistent and often contradictory, which negatively impacts the ability to communicate what plastics are accepted for recycling.

A set of common outreach terms (a glossary or lexicon) and royalty-free images helps communities communicate more effectively to residents about which plastics to recycle, making it easier for residents to participate and to recycle more of the desired plastics.

Main Program Categories

Each main category has subcategories that help further define what is accepted. Refer to Appendix A for even more detailed definitions for the subcategories.

<input type="radio"/>	Specific Plastic Bottles & Jars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic PET (1) Bottles & Jars • Plastic HDPE (2) Bottles & Jars
<input type="radio"/>	Specific Plastic Bottles & Containers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic PET (1) Bottles & Jars • Plastic HDPE (2) Bottles & Jars • Plastic PET (1) Containers & Lids • Plastic HDPE (2) Containers & Lids
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Beverage Bottles <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic Soda, Water & Other Drink Bottles
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Bottles & Jars <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic Soda, Water & Other Drink Bottles • Plastic Food & Household Bottles/Jars
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Bottles & Containers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic Soda, Water & Other Drink Bottles • Plastic Food & Household Bottles/Jars • Plastic Tubs & Lids • Plastic Produce, Deli & Bakery Containers, Cups, Trays • Plastic Non-food Containers & Packaging
<input type="radio"/>	Rigid Plastic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic Soda, Water & Other Drink Bottles • Plastic Food & Household Bottles/Jars • Plastic Tubs & Lids • Plastic Produce, Deli & Bakery Containers, Cups, Trays • Plastic Non-food Containers & Packaging • Plastic Bulky Items
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic Soda, Water & Other Drink Bottles • Plastic Food & Household Bottles/Jars • Plastic Tubs & Lids • Plastic Produce, Deli & Bakery Containers, Cups, Trays • Plastic Non-food Containers & Packaging • Plastic Bulky Items • Plastic Bags, Wraps & Film (bag in bag)

Build Your Program with the New Outreach Terms

Match the plastics collected in your recycling program with the new outreach terms. This is a 4 step process.

Step 1: Select the main program category that best describes the plastics you will accept.

If it's not a perfect match, don't worry, steps 2 and 3 enable you to add and exclude specific materials.

Tip:

Select the Main Category that represents only what you accept and then add using the next set of addition categories to fully represent your program. i.e if your program only takes bottles and tubs & lids, we suggest selecting Plastic Bottles & Jars and then choosing Tubs & Lids in Step 2, as opposed to saying Plastic Bottles and Containers and then adding a number of exclusions in Step 3.

Additions

<input type="radio"/>	Plastic PET (1) Containers & Lids
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic HDPE (2) Containers & Lids
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic PP (5) Bottles
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic PP (5) Containers & Lids
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Tubs & Lids
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Tubs
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Non-food Containers & Packaging
<input type="radio"/>	Foam Food Service & Other Containers
<input type="radio"/>	Foam Blocks & Shapes
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Bulky Items
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Toys
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Buckets
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Flower Pots
<input type="radio"/>	Plastic Bags, Wraps & Film (bag in bag)
<input type="radio"/>	Plastics Bags

Step 2: Additions can be added to one of the seven main categories, if the items are not already covered OR can be used as individual selections, if the main categories don't fit your program, i.e A drop off for only Plastic Bags, Wraps & Film (bag in bag)

Exclusions

Step 3: For specific plastic materials that should not be included in the recycling bin, use the following categories.

Tip:

Include only your most important exclusions, the longer the list, the less attention the public will give to those that matter most.

<input type="checkbox"/>	No Containers that held Hazardous Products
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Motor Oil Bottles/ Containers
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Products that are Compostable (e.g. PLA)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Products that Contain Bio- or Oxi- Degradable Additives
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Microwavable Containers
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Bags, Wrap or Film Plastic
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Frozen Food Bags
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Other Film
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Foam
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Foam Food Service: cups, plates, take-out containers

<input type="checkbox"/>	No Foam Blocks/Shapes
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Foam Peanuts
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Thin Foamed Sheets/Wrap (used around products like electronics)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Flower Pots
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Buckets
<input type="checkbox"/>	No clamshells or trays from produce, deli, bakery, take-out
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Cups
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Straws
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Caps
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Lids

<input type="checkbox"/>	No Toys
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Toys with Metal or Electronic Components
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Blister Packs (clear formed packaging around products like toys, hardware and electronics)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Black Plastic
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Plastic marked PVC (3)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Plastic marked PS (6)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Plastic marked Other (7)
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Electronics/Appliances
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Food Contaminated Containers
<input type="checkbox"/>	No Pouches (stand up bags or squeeze pouches for items such as: ground coffee, juice, dried fruit, yogurt, laundry, oil)

Suggested/Optional Notes

<input type="radio"/>	Empty, flatten and put caps back on bottles/jars
<input type="radio"/>	Rinse or wipe clean all food or other residue from bottles & containers
<input type="radio"/>	Include lids with containers
<input type="radio"/>	Remove caps/lids and put in trash
<input type="radio"/>	Remove tape and labels from foam blocks and shapes/protective packaging
<input type="radio"/>	Place all clean, dry bags and film inside another bag and tie off
<input type="radio"/>	Separate non plastic (e.g. paper or metal) attachments from plastic products

Step 4: These are suggested notes that can be added at the end of what you list as accepted to provide clear additional direction.

Example Terminology:

PLEASE RECYCLE:

Plastic Bottles & Containers

- Plastic Soda, Water and Other Drink Bottles
- Plastic Food and Household Bottles / Jars
- Plastic Tubs & Lids
- Plastic Produce, Deli & Bakery Containers, Cups, Trays
- Plastic Non-food Containers & Packaging

Plastic Buckets

- *Empty, flatten and put caps back on bottles / jars
- *Rinse or wipe clean all food or other residue from bottles

DO NOT INCLUDE:

No Containers that held Hazardous Products

Main Category

Additions

Suggested/
Optional Notes

Exclusions

Appendix A - Definitions

Plastic Soda, Water & Other Drink Bottles

Soda, water, juice and other beverages – Commonly marked: PET (1), HDPE (2), PP (5), Other (7)

Plastic Food & Household Bottles/Jars

Screw top bottles/jars - For Example: Food: ketchup, peanut butter, mayonnaise, mustard, Household: laundry detergent, shampoo, and cleaning products – Commonly marked: PET (1), HDPE (2), LDPE (4), PP (5), Other (7)

Plastic Tubs

Tub containers, such as: yogurt, margarine, ice cream tubs, coffee containers: Commonly marked: HDPE (2), LDPE (4), PP (5)

Plastic Tubs & Lids

Tub containers and lids for items such as: yogurt, margarine, ice cream tubs, coffee containers – Commonly marked: HDPE (2), LDPE (4), PP (5)

Plastic Produce, Deli & Bakery Containers, Cups, Trays

Take-out, deli, bakery, berries/produce containers, cookie trays, cake domes, party cups, clear egg cartons – Commonly marked: PET (1), PP (5), PS (6), Other (7)

Plastic Non-food Containers & Packaging

Containers and packaging for non-food items such as: flower pots, small storage containers like tupperware, CD/DVD cases, clear formed plastic packaging around products like toys or hardware and electronics (paper components should be removed) – Commonly marked: PET(1), HDPE (2), LDPE (4), PP (5), PS (6), Other (7)

Plastic Bulky Items

Items as large as or larger than a 5 gallon bucket, such as: drums, large water bottles, crates, large storage bins, baskets, totes and lawn furniture – some may be marked: PET (1), HDPE (2), LDPE (4), PP (5), Other (7)

Plastic Toys

Plastic Toys without metal or electronic components. For Example: Slides, play kitchen, sand bucket and shovel, flying disk, bat & ball

Plastic Buckets

5 gallon buckets, kitty litter buckets – Commonly marked: HDPE (2), PP (5)

Plastic Flower Pots

Rigid flower pots, 4 inches or larger – Commonly marked: HDPE (2), PP (5)

Plastic PET (1) Bottles & Jars

Screw top bottles/jars that are marked PET (1) - For Example: Beverage - soda, juice, water and other beverages, Food - ketchup, peanut butter, mayonnaise, mustard, Household - shampoo, cleaning products

Plastic PET (1) Containers & Lids

Take-out and other containers, lids, cake domes and trays used to package items such as fresh produce, baked goods, nuts, and deli items; and clear cups that are marked PET (1)

Appendix A - Definitions

Plastic HDPE (2) Bottles & Jars

Screw top bottles/jars that are marked HDPE (2) - For Example: Beverage/Food - milk, juice, and other beverages, mustard, Household - laundry detergent, supplements/vitamins, shampoo, cleaning products

Plastic HDPE (2) Containers & Lids

Tub containers and lids for items such as yogurt, margarine, ice cream tubs, coffee and deli containers that are marked HDPE (2)

Plastic PP (5) Bottles

Screw-top bottles, For example: Beverage - tea, juice and other beverages, Food: Syrup, Household: storage bottles, that are marked PP (5)

Plastic PP (5) Containers & Lids

Tubs, take-out, small storage and other containers, lids, trays used to package items such as dairy, hot food, and deli items; and single use and reusable cups that are marked PP (5)

Plastic Bags

Grocery/Retail carry out bags – Commonly marked: HDPE (2) and LDPE (4)

Plastic Bags, Wraps & Film (bag in bag)

Clean and dry plastic bags, wrap and film - For Example: Grocery/Retail store, newspaper, bread, and produce bags, dry cleaning film, the wrap around products (e.g., bathroom tissue, 24-pack of water), bubble wrap, air pillows, plastic only shipping envelopes – Commonly marked: HDPE (2) and LDPE (4)

Foam Food Service & Other Containers

Foam cups, plates, bowls, take-out containers, egg cartons – marked PS (6)

Foam Blocks & Shapes

Protective packing - often used to protect fragile products, such as electronics as well as other molded foam shapes, such as foam coolers - marked PS (6)