




# Recycling Codes

Plastic recycling can be very confusing. Even within the same plastic group there are differences. To understand what this means consider apples. A red apple is not a green apple. Similarly, a No. 2 plastic, narrow-neck, milk jug is not the same as a No. 2 plastic, wide-mouth, yogurt cup.

## TIPS FOR RECYCLING

1. You can help keep collection, sorting, and reprocessing costs down, and keep the value of the plastic high by recycling only those types of plastic that are currently accepted for recycling.
2. Rinse all containers.
3. Take caps and pump spray tops off of plastic containers unless they are marked with a number. They are often made from a type of plastic that is different from the main part of the container and generally are not recyclable.
4. Crush plastic containers as well as boxes to save space in your recycling bin.
5. Place all recyclable containers in the recycling side of your split can that was provided to you by the City of Visalia.

There are many types of plastic. Plastic must be sorted by type for recycling since each type melts at a different temperature and has different properties. The plastics industry has developed an identification system (or identification codes) to label the different types of plastic. The identification system divides plastic into seven distinct types and uses a number code generally found on the bottom of containers. The following table explains the seven code system:

 <p><b>PETE</b></p>	<p><b>Plastic No. 1</b> Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET, PETE)</p> <p><b>Common Uses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic soft drink, water, sports drink, beer, mouthwash, catsup and salad dressing bottles, peanut butter, pickle, jelly and jam jars, prepared food trays and film that is used to cook frozen foods and roast.</li> <li>• Commonly used in soft drink bottles and many injection molded consumer product containers. Other applications include strapping and both food and non-food containers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recycled Products Include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiber, tote bags, clothing, film and sheet, food and beverage containers, carpet, strapping, fleece wear, luggage and bottles.</li> <li>• Cleaned, recycled PET flakes and pellets are in great demand for spinning fiber for carpet yarns, producing fiberfill and geo-textiles.</li> <li>• Nickname...Polyester.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Description:</b> Plastic No. 1 (PET, PETE) is clear, tough, and has good gas and moisture barrier properties and is resistance to heat.</p>
 <p><b>HDPE</b></p>	<p><b>Plastic No. 2</b> High Density Polyethylene (HDPE)</p> <p><b>Common Uses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Milk, water, juice, cosmetic, shampoo, dish and laundry detergent bottles; yogurt and margarine tubs; cereal box liners; grocery, trash and retail bags.</li> <li>• HDPE is used to make bottles for milk, juice, water and laundry products. Unpigmented bottles are translucent, have good barrier properties and stiffness, and are well suited to packaging products with a short shelf life such as milk. Because HDPE has good chemical resistance, it is used for packaging many household and industrial chemicals such as detergent and bleach. Pigmented HDPE bottles have better stress crack resistance than unpigmented HDPE bottles.</li> </ul> <p><b>Recycled Products Include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liquid laundry detergent, shampoo, conditioner and motor oil bottles; pipe, buckets, crates, flower pots, garden edging, film and sheet, recycling bins, benches, dog houses, plastic lumber, floor tiles, picnic tables, fencing.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Description:</b> HDPE has stiffness, strength, toughness, resistance to chemicals and moisture, permeability to gas, ease of processing, and ease of forming.</p>
 <p><b>V</b></p>	<p><b>Plastic No. 3</b> Vinyl (Polyvinyl Chloride or PVC)</p>	<p><b>Description:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Versatility, clarity, ease of blending, strength, toughness,</li> <li>• In addition to its stable physical properties, PVC has excellent grease, oil and chemical resistance, performs well in all weather, flow characteristics and stable electrical properties.</li> <li>• The diverse slate of vinyl products can be broadly divided into rigid and flexible materials.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Common Uses:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear food and non-food packaging, salad dressing and liquid detergent containers, loose-leaf binders, medical tubing, wire and cable insulation, film and sheet, construction products such as plastic pipes, fittings, decking, paneling, gutters, mud flaps, siding, floor tiles, carpet backing and window frames..</li> <li>• Bottles and packaging sheet are major rigid markets, but it is also widely used in the construction market for such applications as pipes and fittings, siding, carpet backing and windows.</li> </ul>	

medical tubing and many other applications.

**Recycled Products Include:**

- Packaging, film and sheet, floor tiles and mats, resilient flooring, cassette trays, electrical boxes, cables, traffic cones, garden hose, mobile home skirting.



**Plastic No. 4**

Low Density Polyethylene (LDPE)

**Description:**

- Used predominately in film applications due to its ease of processing, strength, toughness, flexibility, relative transparency, and ease of sealing, and its barrier to moisture, making it popular for use in applications where heat sealing is necessary.

**Common Uses:**

- Dry cleaning bags, produce bags, trash can liners, bread and frozen food bags, food storage containers, squeezable bottles, e.g. honey, mustard
- LDPE is also used to manufacture some flexible lids and bottles and it is used in wire and cable applications

**Recycled Products Include:**

- Shipping envelopes, garbage can liners, floor tile, furniture, film and sheet, compost bins, paneling, trash cans, landscape timber, lumber



**Plastic No. 5**

Polypropylene (PP)

**Description:**

- Polypropylene has strength, toughness, resistance to heat, chemicals, grease and oil, versatile, barrier to moisture and has a high melting point making it good for hot-fill liquids.
- PP is found in flexible and rigid packaging to fibers and large molded parts for automotive and consumer products.

**Common Uses:**

- Catsup bottles, yogurt containers and margarine tubs, medicine bottles, aerosol caps, drinking straws

**Recycled Products Include:**

- Automobile battery cases, signal lights, battery cables, brooms, brushes, ice scrapers, oil funnels, bicycle racks, rakes, bins, pallets, sheeting, trays



**Plastic No. 6**

Polystyrene (PS)

**Description:**

- Polystyrene is versatile, good insulation, clarity, and an easily formed plastic that can be rigid or foamed.
- General purpose polystyrene is clear, hard and brittle. It has a relatively low melting point.

**Common Uses:**

- Compact disc jackets, food service applications, grocery store meat trays, egg cartons, aspirin bottles, packaging pellets or Styrofoam peanuts, plastic tableware...cups, cutlery, plates meat trays, to-go "clam shell" containers
- Other applications include protective packaging, containers, lids, cups, bottles and trays.

**Recycled Products Include:**

- Thermometers, light switch plates, thermal insulation, egg cartons, vents, desk trays, rulers, license plate frames, foam packing, foam plates, cups, utensils



**Plastic No. 7**

Other Plastics

**Description:**

- Use of this code indicates that the package in question is made with a resin other than the six listed above, or is made of more than one resin listed above, and used in a multi-layer combination.

**Common Uses:**

- Three and five gallon reusable water bottles, some citrus juice and catsup bottles
- Certain kinds of food containers and Tupperware.

**Recycled Products Include:**

- Bottles, plastic lumber applications