

# THE TRUTH ABOUT PLASTICS



Many of us have been tricked into using the triangular symbol with a number inside to identify what can be recycled.

But this symbol is **NOT** a recycling symbol. It is a plastics identification code used to tell manufacturers what type of plastic the item is made from.















## WHAT PLASTICS CAN BE RECYCLED?

Any plastic container that is rigid can be recycled! A handy tip for deciding if the container is “rigid” is if it:

- holds its shape when crumpled, and/or
- would hold liquid.

Here's a quick guide to containers with the plastic code that **CAN** be placed in your recycling bin:



Symbol	Type of plastic	Types of containers	Accepted in your recycle bin?
 PET	Polyethylene Terephthalate <b>PET</b>	Carbonated soft drink bottles, detergent bottles.	
 HDPE	High Density Polyethylene <b>HDPE</b>	Milk and cream bottles, shampoo bottles, cleaning products.	
 PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride <b>PVC</b>	Clear cordial and juice bottles.	
 LDPE	Low Density Polyethylene <b>LDPE</b>	Squeeze bottles.	
 PP	Polypropylene <b>PP</b>	Ice cream containers and lids, plastic take away containers.	
 PS	Polystyrene <b>PS</b>	Yoghurt containers and margarine/ butter containers.	

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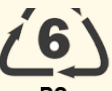

## NOW YOU CAN RECYCLE PLASTIC LIDS!

Lids must be removed from bottles and containers before placing in the recycling bin but leaving them loose in your recycling bin means they are often too small to be captured at the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) where recyclables are sorted.

We used to tell you to put these in the waste bin BUT now you can simply collect plastic lids in a milk bottle and once full place in your recycling bin with a lid on. Sorters at the MRF will easily be able to identify and sort your milk bottle with lids and recycle it with other mixed plastics.



## WHAT PLASTICS CANNOT BE RECYCLED?

 <b>LDPE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic bags used in packaging often show the plastics identification symbol with a number 4 but all soft plastics, including plastic bags, create problems at the MRF by wrapping around machinery.</li> <li>• Do not place soft plastics in the recycling bin. Plastic bags can be recycled through specially labelled bins at your local supermarket.</li> <li>• Likewise irrigation and garden hoses can wrap around machinery in the MRF so need to be placed in the waste bin.</li> </ul>	
 <b>PS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lightweight polystyrene, such as used for meat trays, packaging (including foam packing 'peanuts') and hot drink cups are often labelled with a number 6 but as this plastic has been 'expanded' from a rigid form to foam it cannot be put in kerbside recycle bins. Place polystyrene foam in your waste bin.</li> </ul>	

## Unsure about which bin a specific waste item should go?

Check out the **RECYCLE RIGHT** online search engine that will provide details specific to your council.

Visit [zerowaste.sa.gov.au/recycle-right](http://zerowaste.sa.gov.au/recycle-right) or call **1300 137 118**.

You can also find tips on what to do with **items that cannot be placed in your kerbside bins**, such as oils, e-waste, light globes and household chemicals. Some of these services are free. Visit [zerowaste.sa.gov.au/at-home](http://zerowaste.sa.gov.au/at-home) or call **1300 137 118**.

## About Zero Waste SA

The goal of Zero Waste SA is to encourage South Australians to:

- maximise the value of our resources
- avoid and reduce waste

[www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au](http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au)

## For more information

on recycling and the symbols on plastics go to [www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/at-home/recycle-right/what-do-the-numbers-and-symbols-on-plastics-mean](http://www.zerowaste.sa.gov.au/at-home/recycle-right/what-do-the-numbers-and-symbols-on-plastics-mean).



Government of South Australia  
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