

The Different Types Of Plastics And Their Classifications



Plastic is an essential component of numerous consumer products, including water bottles and product containers. However, not every kind of plastic is the same. In 1988, the Society of the Plastics Industry (SPI) established a classification system to help consumers and recyclers properly recycle and dispose of each different type based on its chemical makeup. Today, manufacturers follow a coding system and place a number, or SPI code, on each plastic product, usually molded into the bottom. Although you should always verify the plastic classification number of each product you use, especially if you plan on recycling it, this guide provides a basic outline of the different plastic types associated with each code number



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Plastic marked with an SPI code of 1 is made with polyethylene terephthalate, which is also known as PETE or PET. PETE-based containers sometimes absorb odors and flavors from foods and drinks that are stored inside of them. Items made from this plastic are commonly recycled. PETE plastic is used to make many common household items like beverage bottles, medicine jars, peanut butter jars, combs, bean bags, and rope. Recycled PETE is used to make tote bags, carpet, fiberfill material in winter clothing, and more.



The SPI code of 2 identifies plastic made with high-density polyethylene, or HDPE.



The SPI code of 2 identifies plastic made with high-density polyethylene, or HDPE. HDPE products are very safe and are not known to leach any chemicals into foods or drinks. (However, due to the risk of contamination from previously held substances, please note: it is NEVER safe to reuse an HDPE bottle as a food or drink container if it didn't originally contain food or drink!) HDPE products are commonly recycled. Items made from this plastic include containers for milk, motor oil, shampoos and conditioners, soap bottles, detergents, and bleaches. Many personalized toys are made from this plastic as well. Recycled HDPE is used to make plastic crates, plastic lumber, fencing, and more.