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February 2015 EcoFacts



Know your Plastics



Plastic #6

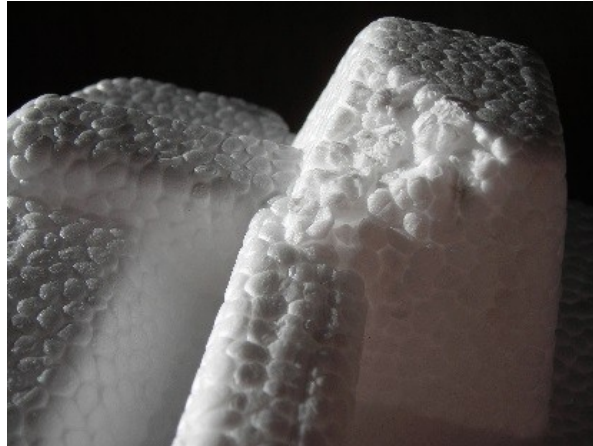
Expanded Foam Polystyrene, Extruded Foam Polystyrene, and Polystyrene

Expanded polystyrene foam (EPS) is a rigid, closed-cell foam used for a wide variety of applications, including building insulation, packing materials and take-out food containers. Similarly, extruded polystyrene foam (XPS) is used for rigid building insulation, foam food trays and other consumer products. When made into insulation, EPS and XPS usually contain the brominated flame retardant HBCD, a chemical of concern to human health. Blower agents can also be problematic. HCFC, the blower agent used in the manufacture of XPS, has a well-documented high global warming potential.

Many community and curbside recycling services don't accept foam polystyrene because its low density makes it uneconomical to collect. However, package mailing or delivery companies often accept clean foam polystyrene packing material for reuse. Polystyrene (PS) (non-foam) is made into consumer items such as lids for fast-food drink containers. If your municipal or residential recycler accepts #6 plastics, this is likely the type they will accept.

What You Can Do

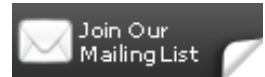
Abstain from the use of these fossil fuel based consumer products by avoiding retailers that use them. Talk to your local food purveyor about choosing more environmentally friendly products, and refuse drinks served in polystyrene foam. Bring your own reusable containers to restaurants for take-home food. Alternatives to EPS and XPS insulation include rigid insulation made from rock basalt and slag, and non-rigid insulation made of fiberglass, cellulose, wool and denim.



Visit www.wastecapne.org for all the information you need for recycling in Nebraska.



WasteCap Nebraska
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