

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tips on How to Recycle Plastic

You may see them on bottles of water, a gallon of milk, or even produce bags; little numbers inside of a triangle. Have you ever wondered what those numbers mean? When most people look on the bottom of a water bottle or gallon of milk and see the number in a triangle they assume it means it is recyclable, however, this is only part of the story. The numbers 1-7 identify the type of plastic that a container or bag is made out of. Number 1 plastic, polyethylene terephthalate (PETE), is most commonly used in beverage containers and prepackaged food containers. Number 2, high density polyethylene (HDPE), is mostly used for milk and juice bottles, but is also used to make containers for cleaning chemicals and shampoo bottles. Number 3, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), can be made into anything from shrink wrap to plastic toys. Low density polyethylene (LDPE), or number 4, is used to make produce and bread bags. Number 5, polypropylene (PP), usually is used in medicine containers and yogurt containers. Polystyrene (PS), number 6, is most often found in its expanded form. Expanded polystyrene (EPS), or Styrofoam, is most commonly used for take-out food containers, cups, and packaging. This type of plastic is not able to be recycled in Tehama County. Finally, plastic manufacturers use number 7 for types of plastic not covered by 1-6 or containers made from multiple types of plastic.

While most of these plastics can be recycled in Tehama County, number 6 plastic or polystyrene, is not able to be recycled in our county. The Tehama County/Red Bluff Landfill accepts numbers 1-5 and 7, in addition to all other recyclables, free of charge from residents if the materials are separated from their load of trash. Now whenever you see a number in a triangle you will know that it identifies what type of plastic the container is made of and that it is able to be recycled if a program exists in your area.

As you may be aware, plastic is made from fossil fuels and the recycling market for plastic is very dependent on the price of oil. When the price of oil drops the amount paid for recycled plastic also declines. While the Tehama County/Red Bluff Landfill makes less money, or loses money, when the recycling markets drop for commodities such as plastic, the value of diverting these recyclables from the landfill remains the same. By keeping recyclables out of the landfill we are helping to extend the life of the landfill and have this resource available to our County for future generations. On the other hand, by placing more recyclables in the landfill it not only fills

the landfill quicker but also eliminates the potential for these recyclables to see a new life. A few examples of what plastics can be recycled into include PETE #1 being made into new PETE bottles or spun into polyester fiber for clothing, and PP #5 can be made into battery cases and brooms. Next time you are purchasing goods made from plastic, look to see if the item was made from recycled plastics. After all, it is not recycling if no one buys the end (recycled) product. For more information about what can be recycled in Tehama County or for other waste related questions, contact the Tehama County Solid Waste Management Agency at (530) 528-1103 or visit our website, www.tehamacountylandfill.com.