

## Get a discount by recycling rigid plastics

Hard or rigid plastics can be recycled to make a huge range of products such as car parts, buckets, drums, shelving, garbage bins, road cones, drainage pipes and even clothing.

It is no wonder that many businesses regard this hard plastic, which is found in items like drink bottles and crates, as valuable.

### The benefits of recycling rigid plastic

Making plastic is an energy intensive process and so a significant amount of energy and valuable petrochemical are locked into the material. Reusing old plastic saves 80 to 90 per cent of the energy required to make the same item from virgin materials<sup>1</sup>.

There is a wide range of plastics and not all types can be recycled the same way. The Plastics Identification Code<sup>2</sup> lists seven different types of plastic product based on the type of resin used. It shows what products can be made from the recycled plastics. The code makes it easier to identify and separate different plastics for recycling<sup>3</sup>.

Look for the code's familiar triangular recycling symbol and use the numbers as a guide for sorting different types of plastics for recycling.

By recycling rigid plastics, your business can directly benefit from reduced waste collection charges. You will also greatly benefit the environment, because less plastic will be sent to landfill.



### Simple ways to cut hard plastics costs

Think in terms of the waste hierarchy. How can you avoid, reduce, reuse or recycle plastics?

- Avoid** → **Do we need it?**
- Reduce** → **Do we need so much?**
- Reuse** → **Can we use it again?**
- Recycle** → **Can someone else use it or convert it into something new?**



#### AVOID

Try to avoid buying unnecessary plastic products. One way to reduce the number of small plastic bottles that your business consumes is by purchasing products such as detergents in bulk and decanting these into smaller reusable containers as required.



## REDUCE

If possible arrange with your suppliers to obtain products in returnable bulk containers.

Consider reducing the number of different types of plastic that come into the business, especially when purchasing products. Refer to the code to make it easier. Reducing the types of plastic your business uses will simplify disposal and recycling.



## REUSE

Tell your suppliers you prefer them to use reusable shipping containers such as plastic bins, totes, crates or palletised containers. Also use reusable plastic containers within your own operation to store and protect products.



## RECYCLE

Visit **BusinessRecycling.com.au** to find local recycling service providers for different types of plastic. The site allows you to search for the nearest recycling service provider for various materials.

Ask your recycling contractors which types of plastic they can accept and how these should be prepared.

Obviously you will achieve the best possible recycling outcomes by training staff and cleaners on how to use the system. Getting employees engaged can help your recycling and savings program succeed.

Here are some more tips:

- If there is not enough plastic to justify your business getting a separate bin, consider sharing a plastics recycling bin with an adjacent business.
- Plastics contaminated with other materials are usually not accepted. Avoid cross contamination in bins by putting up clear signs.
- Consider investing in a bailer if the volume of plastic is significant in your business. Clean, sorted and bailed plastic has a value and can no longer be considered a waste.
- The best return will come through separating and then baling the seven plastic types listed in the Plastics Identification Code. So it will pay you to get familiar with the different plastics listed in the code. You can look at recycling other plastics like shrink wrap and plastic bags.

While recycling plastics may require the use of extra bins for dedicated recycling, the advantage is that your business may not have to pay for this collection.

### For further information

Waste and Resource Recovery  
Resource Recovery Unit  
Email: [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au)

EPA 2012/0357 November 2012  
ISBN 978-1-74293-892-9

### Published by:

Environment Protection Authority  
59–61 Goulburn Street, Sydney South 1232  
Ph: 131 555 (environment information and publications requests)  
TTY: (02) 9211 4723  
Email: [info@environment.nsw.gov.au](mailto:info@environment.nsw.gov.au) Web: [www.epa.nsw.gov.au](http://www.epa.nsw.gov.au)  
Report pollution and environmental incidents: Environment Line: 131 555 (NSW only)