

PET 101:

Everything you need to know about the world's #1 plastic.



Not all plastics are the same. PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles and containers are safe, lightweight, resealable, and shatter-resistant. Best of all, they are designed to be fully recyclable. More than 3 billion pounds of PET bottles and containers are collected for recycling each year in North America, helping to make PET the world's most widely recovered plastic.

Environment

PET bottles and containers are made to be remade. They are 100% recyclable and can be made with up to 100% recycled content, making PET the best packaging for our environment.

- PET is recyclable over and over, serving the world in many forms, again and again.
- Its material recycling value makes PET less likely to end up in landfills.
- Consumers could avoid generating 2.6 billion pounds of solid waste—the equivalent of nearly 200,000 elephants—if they picked PET plastic bottles over cans of soda for just one year.
- 75% more recycled PET (rPET) is used in new products made annually in the U.S. and Canada compared to 2010.
- More than half the rPET used in the U.S. and Canada in 2022 went into making new PET bottles.
- PET's lightweight nature lowers shipping costs, reducing fuel consumption and emissions.
- When used PET is recycled into new products, it results in 59% lower greenhouse gas emissions than virgin PET production.
- PET is the only plastic with the designation #1. When you see the 1 inside the triangle on your bottle or container, you know it's PET and should be recycled.
- Producing a 16.9 oz. PET plastic water bottle generates 74% lower greenhouse gas emissions than a 12 oz. aluminum can.



Impact

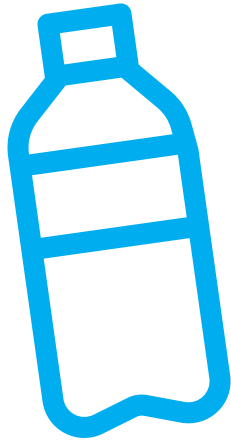
PET has a huge impact on the world economy. In North America in particular:

- PET generates jobs for more than 265,000 workers in the U.S. and Canada.
- More than 3 billion pounds of used PET bottles and containers are collected annually in North America to be recycled.
- PET's exceptional strength-to-weight ratio permits more product to be delivered with less packaging, requiring less fuel to transport.

Performance

PET plastic provides high performance relative to other materials, especially with regard to packaging and protecting food and beverages.

- PET packaging and bottles showcase products with crystal clarity and luster.
- PET demonstrates excellent resistance to moisture, micro-organisms, and degradation.
- PET bottles and containers are more durable and versatile than aluminum, and unlike glass, shatter-resistant.
- PET is FDA-approved for contact with food and beverages.
- PET does not contain and has never contained bisphenol A (BPA).



Disaster Recovery

PET is essential to communities recovering from catastrophic disasters, such as earthquakes, hurricanes, and floods.

- From food and water to soap and critical healthcare supplies, PET bottles and containers make it possible for communities and families to get the lifesaving items they need and get back on their feet.
- PET's lightweight and shatter-resistant material means bottles and containers can quickly be shipped to those directly affected.
- Because PET plastic is food-safe, victims can access clean food and safe drinking water without fear of contamination.
- All PET containers used in recovery efforts can be recycled, further helping the planet.

How to Recycle Right

Recycling PET is the simplest thing to do to help the environment.

Here are ways to help the world's #1 plastic get recycled even more:

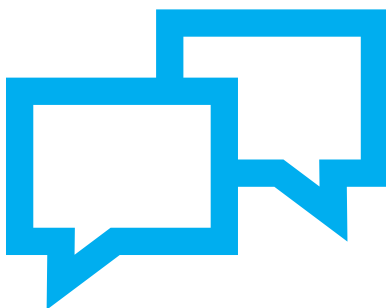
- Choose PET plastic over alternative packaging and **always** recycle when finished.
- Do not put PET bottles and containers in the regular trash, or they won't be recycled.
- Rinse PET bottles and containers thoroughly before placing them in a recycling bin.
- Lids or caps are often not made of PET, but they can be recycled with the bottle if left on.



Get Involved

Many people treat all packaging the same, to the detriment of our planet. Educating others about the benefits of PET plastic can save our environment and educate the next generation. Here are ways to spread the word:

- Spread the good word about PET plastic among family, friends, and community.
- Submit an article to your local newspaper about why PET is different from other plastics—and far more sustainable than glass and aluminum.
- Start your own PET recycling club.
- More bins mean more wins. If your community doesn't have recycling bins, contact your local government officials to request them.
- Contact your local recycling center to find out if they allow school and community tours.



Updated April 2024

Learn more about the positive economic and environmental benefits of PET plastic at PositivelyPET.org.

 **NAPCOR**
National Association for PET Container Resources