



UNDERSTANDING RESIN IDENTIFICATION CODES

WHAT ARE RESIN IDENTIFICATION CODES?

Resin Identification Codes (RICs) are the numbers (1-7) found on many plastic products, typically inside a triangle symbol. They identify the type of plastic resin used to make a product and help guide sorting and processing within the recycling system.

RICs are not recycling instructions, but they play an important role by helping recyclers sort materials efficiently, supporting consistent processing, and enabling plastics to be remade into new products.

THE 7 RESIN ID CODES



#1 PET
POLYETHYLENE TEREPHALATE

Common Uses: Water bottles, soda bottles, food containers
Recycling: Widely recycled through curbside programs
End Use: New bottles, containers, fiber (carpet, clothing)



#2 HDPE
HIGH-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE

Common Uses: Milk jugs, detergent bottles, shampoo bottles
Recycling: Widely recycled
End Use: New containers, piping, durable goods



#3 PVC
POLYVINYL CHLORIDE

Common Uses: Pipes, vinyl flooring, medical products
Recycling: Limited curbside recycling
End Use: Construction materials and specialty products



#4 LDPE
LOW-DENSITY POLYETHYLENE

Common Uses: Plastic bags, wraps, flexible packaging
Recycling: Typically collected through store drop-off programs
End Use: New film products, composite materials



#5 PP
POLYPROPYLENE

Common Uses: Yogurt cups, caps, food containers
Recycling: Increasingly accepted in curbside programs
End Use: Containers, automotive parts, consumer goods



#6 PS
POLYSTYRENE

Common Uses: Foam cups, packaging, rigid containers
Recycling: Limited curbside recycling; some specialty programs
End Use: Insulation, packaging products



#7 OTHER
MIXED OR SPECIALTY PLASTICS

Common Uses: Polycarbonate products, multi-layer packaging
Recycling: Varies by material and local program
End Use: Depends on resin type and processing method

LEARN MORE

Visit www.recyclingisreal.org to explore how recycling works across the United States.

More than one million Americans work in jobs directly or indirectly connected to the plastics industry, spanning a wide range of sectors. From the engineers who design the machinery that manufactures essential plastic products, to the material suppliers distributing raw plastics, to the processors shaping materials into goods, and the recyclers giving used plastic a second life, the plastics supply chain is a vital aspect within both the U.S. and global economy.