



Polystyrene (plastics marked #6-PS) food service ware is not recyclable in Montgomery County, Maryland and can become litter and harm the environment.

In 2015, Montgomery County prohibited the use and sale of expanded polystyrene (also known as Styrofoam™) food service ware and loose fill packaging, and further required that all disposable food service ware be compostable or recyclable in Montgomery County, Maryland.

In 2020, the County Executive proposed and the County Council enacted Bill 33-20 which clarified the existing requirements and outright states that the use and sale of **all** #6 polystyrene food service ware (including expanded and other forms) is banned to minimize any possible confusion.

**MAKE THE SWITCH FROM #6 PLASTICS.
USE REUSABLE, RECYCLABLE, OR COMPOSTABLE
FOOD SERVICE WARE.**

Want to help reduce waste even more? Encourage your customers and employees to bring their own reusable containers for their meals and beverages.

**For more information, visit
MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/SwitchFromSix**



Montgomery County, Maryland
Department of Environmental Protection
Recycling and Resource Management Division
Waste Reduction and Recycling Section
2425 Reedie Drive, 4th Floor
Wheaton, Maryland 20902

MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/SwitchFromSix
311 or 240-777-0311
TTY: MD Relay 711

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Switch FROM #6 PLASTICS



Information about Montgomery County's Ban on the Use and Sale of Polystyrene Food Service Ware



MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/SwitchFromSix

THE LAW AT-A-GLANCE

- The use of all #6 polystyrene food service products by food service businesses is prohibited.
- The sale of polystyrene loose fill packaging, or packing peanuts, and all #6 polystyrene food service products is prohibited.
- All food services businesses, including county agencies, contractors or lessees must use food service products that are compostable or recyclable in Montgomery County, Maryland.



WHY ARE #6 POLYSTYRENE FOOD SERVICE WARE AND PACKING PEANUTS BANNED IN MONTGOMERY COUNTY?

Polystyrene (PS) #6 products are not recyclable in Montgomery County.

Polystyrene plastics include plastic and foam cups, bowls, clamshell containers, egg cartons, packing peanuts and other packing materials. These materials are not recyclable in Montgomery County and can become litter and harm the environment.



Using compostable or recyclable food service ware has many benefits:

- Improves the quality of life for County residents, businesses, and visitors by reducing the amount of litter on our land and in our watersheds.
- Decreases the potential for harm to aquatic life, which may mistakenly ingest pieces of polystyrene that enters the waterways as litter.
- Increases the use of recyclable and compostable food service ware which are more sustainable alternatives.

LET'S REDUCE WASTE AND RECYCLE MORE, AIMING FOR ZERO WASTE

This law applies to all food service businesses in Montgomery County, Maryland who are selling or providing food within the County for consumption – on or off the premises, as well as retailers who sell food service ware products.

- Full- & Limited-Service Restaurants
- Fast Food Restaurants
- Cafes & Coffee Shops
- Delicatessens
- Supermarkets & Grocery Stores
- Vending Trucks, Carts & Food Trucks
- Business & Institutional Cafeterias
- Not-for-Profit Organizations
- Federal, State & Local Government Facilities
- Food Service Operated by or on Behalf of County Departments & Agencies
- All Retailers in Montgomery County, MD

ARE THERE ANY EXEMPTIONS?

- Food or beverages may be filled and packaged in polystyrene containers outside of the County before a food service business in the County receives them.
- Polystyrene foam may be used to package raw, uncooked, or butchered meat, seafood, or poultry for off-premises consumption.
- Exempts food service businesses from using compostable or recyclable disposable food service ware if the County determines that there is no suitable or affordable alternative (item will be specified on an exemption list and exemption list will be reviewed and updated annually).

If your business does not comply with the law, it's a Class B civil violation of Montgomery County Code. Each day a violation exists is a separate offense.

WHERE TO FIND RECYCLABLE OR COMPOSTABLE FOOD SERVICE WARE

The Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection Recycling and Resource

Management Division's

Waste Reduction and Recycling Section maintains an online resource listing of vendors that sells food service products that are compostable or recyclable in Montgomery County. Visit MontgomeryCountyMD.gov/SwitchFromSix or call MC311 at 311 or 240-777-0311 (outside Montgomery County) for more information.

