

## **Recycling polystyrene - aka Styrofoam**

Styrofoam is a trademark of the Dow company, but the material itself is called polystyrene. Like so many other plastics, it's all around us - very commonly used in packing material as peanuts or expanded foam, in food trays and a wide variety of other products. Polystyrene is highly flammable and is manufactured from petroleum and benzene, a known human carcinogen. Burning polystyrene is not recommended as burning polystyrene releases styrene gas which can effect the nervous systems of humans and animals.

Polystyrene foam, used commonly as padding in packaging, takes an incredibly long time to break down in the environment and additionally, animals may ingest it which blocks their digestive tracts and ultimately causes starvation. Packaging and products containing polystyrene can usually be identified by a recycling triangle marking with the number 6 stamped inside the triangle. Currently in the USA expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam packaging is being recycled at a rate of approximately 10-12% each year.

### **Polystyrene (stryfoam) Recycling Locations:**

**Recology Oregon Material Recovery Facilities** - Click on the following web link for local drop off locations in the Portland-Metro Area and recycling fee. [www.plcrecycling.com](http://www.plcrecycling.com)

**Earth911.org** - There is a search function at the top of the Earth911 web site where you can enter the term "polystyrene" and then in the box on the right, enter your location. The search results will provide listings of companies and organizations in your local area that will take polystyrene. Note: be sure to enter "polystyrene" rather than "styrofoam" as the latter, being just a brand name, is unlikely to return any results.

### **Reuse Ideas:**

**Keep it as packing** - how many times have you needed to pack something for shipping and found you had nothing on hand? Break down large lumps of styrofoam into smaller chunks and keep a bag of it handy.

**Mailing Services** - Mail Service businesses like The UPS Store, Mailboxes, Etc., FedEx and other related shipping service companies may take your packing peanuts at no charge. Call and ask your local mail service provider if they will take your unwanted packing materials.

**Craft shops** - Craft shops are often a good place to take styrofoam as their customers use it in their projects.