

Article 29 - A proposed ban on polystyrene products sponsored by the Arlington Recycling Committee

Town Meeting in Arlington will be voting this spring on a ban of certain polystyrene disposable containers due to their risk to public health, detrimental impact on the environment, and the low recycling rate for most polystyrene products. For these reasons, polystyrene single use products have already been banned in 31 communities in Massachusetts and an increasing number of cities throughout the country and the world.

What is Polystyrene?

Polystyrene is a plastic commonly used to make containers and lids for food and beverages. Polystyrene can come in a variety of forms ranging from foam products, often referred to as "Styrofoam," to a thin and rigid plastic, such as coffee cup lids. Polystyrene products are usually marked with this #6 PS recycling symbol:



What is included in the proposed ban?

Food service establishments (restaurants, schools, farmer's markets, coffee shops, convenience stores, and public events) would not be allowed to use any form of polystyrene to package or serve food within Arlington.

Retail stores (grocery stores, convenience stores, party supply stores) would not be allowed to sell polystyrene foam products within Arlington.

If made with #6 polystyrene (PS), the following items would be included in the ban:

Food Service

foam cups, bowls or plates
foam "clamshell" containers
clear plastic containers
plastic cups, bowls or plates
forks, knives, spoons

Retail

foam cups, bowls or plates

Are there any exceptions?

Food packaged outside of Arlington is exempt.

Packaging peanuts and items not intended to be disposable (such as foam coolers) are also exempt.

When would the ban go into effect?

If approved by Town Meeting, the ban would go into effect on January 1, 2020.

Who would enforce the ban?

The Department of Health would enforce the bylaw.

For more information - arlingtonma.gov/townmeeting and look for Article 29 under Reference Materials

What are acceptable alternatives?

Businesses should check with their supplier to find out if current containers are polystyrene and what non-polystyrene alternatives they offer. Use washable food service items for on-site use.

The following are acceptable alternatives for disposable containers:

#1 plastic (PETE – polyethylene)	Paper/cardboard products
#5 plastic (PP – polypropylene)	Biodegradable or compostable containers*
#7 plastic (mixed plastics)	Aluminum containers (lid must be foil, cardboard, or an acceptable plastic)



*Products need to be certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute as compostable to qualify. Look for “BPI Certified”.

Many suppliers offer traditional and eco-friendly options

Amazon.com	Pactiv.com
BioMassPackaging.com	TriMark United East
DartContainer.com	WebRestaurantStore.com
Fabri-Kal.com	WBMason.com
MrTakeoutBags.com	WowPlastics.com

And there are suppliers that specialize in eco-friendly products

Tri Mark United East: *Bio-Plus Earth products*
GoingGreenServices.com: *takeout containers, paper products*
Hubert: *Compostable foam meat trays*
Eco-Products: *cups, lids, takeout containers*
US Eco Products: *takeout containers*
Vegware: *plant based cups, lids, containers*

Comparison of costs for sample items

9 x 9 x 3 hinged 3-compartment container
WebRestaurantStore foam (for comparison only) \$.09
WOWplastics PET #1 plastic \$.16 recyclable
WebRestaurantStore sugarcane \$.19 compostable
GoingGreen bagasse \$.29 compostable

Foldable Paper Takeout Box roughly 8 x 5 x 2
WebRestaurantStore \$.18
MrTakeOutBags \$.37 and uses post-consumer paper

Disposable Forks
WowPlastics #5 plastic \$.01
GoingGreen compostable \$.04
Costco compostable \$.05