



Preserving Resources,  
Preventing Waste

# The New Jersey WasteWise Bulletin

Newsletter of the New Jersey WasteWise Business Network – Summer, 2013  
*WasteWise...improving your bottom line and the environment  
through waste reduction, recycling and recycled product procurement.*

## Recycled Plastic Lumber a Great Alternative

Anyone who has ever spent a hot summer day applying wood preservative to their backyard deck with its many spindles and boards knows that it can be a long and tedious job that is not fun in the least. It can also be an expensive job since wood preservative, brushes and more need to be purchased to do the job right. It will be even more expensive should a contractor be hired to treat the deck. A better alternative is to replace your old wooden deck with a deck made of recycled plastic lumber.

Decks made with recycled plastic lumber have many advantages over traditional wooden decks, which make them very attractive to homeowners. Besides never needing to be treated with chemical preservatives or paints, recycled plastic lumber will not rot, splinter or crack. Recycled plastic lumber is also impervious to insects, moisture and chemical resistant, graffiti resistant and does not absorb bacteria. These decks are a maintenance free option that will far outlast traditional wooden decks.

Thanks to its maintenance free and long lasting nature, recycled plastic lumber decks also prove to be less expensive over the life of the deck. The United States Environmental Protection Agency provides an online "Decking Alternatives Cost Calculator" at <http://www.epa.gov/wastes/conserve/tools/greenscapes/tools/decking.pdf> for those interested in estimating the cost of using recycled plastic lumber rather than conventional virgin wood for building a deck. Recycled plastic lumber is available in many hardware stores and can also be purchased through online sources, such as those found

on the NJDEP's Buy Recycled site found at [http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/buy\\_recy/lumber.htm](http://www.nj.gov/dep/dshw/recycling/buy_recy/lumber.htm).

By purchasing a recycled plastic lumber deck, consumers are helping to create long-term stable markets for the recyclable materials that are collected from homes, businesses, industries and institutions. Buying recycled products also conserves natural resources and energy and promotes our nation's recycling and sustainability efforts.

## Did You Know...

- Subway restaurants are now using catering trays made from 95% post-consumer recycled PET.
- The Seattle Mariners were recognized by Major League Baseball as the 2012 American League Recycling Champions for recycling or composting 86% of the waste generated at Safeco Field.
- The first municipal dump was established in ancient Athens in 400 BC. An edict was issued against throwing garbage in the streets and waste was required to be disposed no less than one mile away from the city.
- Baltimore, Maryland began the first ever curbside recycling collection program for paper in 1874!
- Ditto Paper Hangers are made with 80-100% post-consumer waste and use vegetable inks and environmentally friendly adhesives. The hangers, which are recyclable, can hold more than 20 pounds of clothing and are used in more than 5,000 stores around the world.
- Bed Bath & Beyond recently installed RubberWay® rubberized walkways and porous rubber pavement at their Union headquarters. The project used the equivalent of 16,500 recycled passenger tires.

# Chasing Arrows on Plastic Packaging Soon to be History

The plastic Resin Identification Code number (#s 1-7) encircled by three chasing arrows found on plastic packaging has been both a source of helpful information and a source of confusion for consumers for over two decades and as a result will soon be significantly modified. The confusion has resulted from the inclusion of the chasing arrows around the code number since it gives consumers the false perception that all plastic packaging is readily recyclable when in fact many types of plastic packaging cannot be recycled through local recycling programs. The new system will feature the resin identification code number surrounded by a solid equilateral triangle. By replacing the chasing arrows with a triangle, the industry hopes that the code will hereafter be used for its intended purpose, which is resin identification and quality control prior to recycling.

The change to the current system will take place incrementally as only new items will initially feature the newly styled code. Plastic molds that are already in place for existing packages will not need to be changed immediately. Further complicating matters is the fact that 39 states, including New Jersey, have legislation in place that requires the use of the chasing arrows on plastic packaging featuring the numerical code. It is believed that most states will wait before changing their laws to reflect this packaging change since other changes to the system are also being considered. Industry officials hope to have most, if not all, other changes to the system in place within the upcoming year.

## NJ's Neighbors Make Recycling News

Paint recycling in Vermont, mattress recycling in Connecticut and food waste recycling in New York City are expected to take off in the very near future thanks to recent major developments in the Green

Mountain State, the Constitution State and the Big Apple.

Earlier this month, Vermont enacted a new paint recycling stewardship program that will take effect in 2014 and is expected to dramatically increase paint recycling in the state and save money for local governments that previously managed and funded paint recycling programs on their own. The program is based upon a model program developed by the Product Stewardship Institute and is consistent with programs established in other states. The law requires manufacturers to pay a small per-container fee to PaintCare, Inc., a non-profit organization established by the American Coatings Association, which will then be used to fund the collection, transportation, recycling, public outreach and administrative aspects of the program. Manufacturers will pass the fee onto retailers who in turn will pass it on to consumers at the point-of-sale. For details visit [www.paintcare.org](http://www.paintcare.org).

In May of this year, Connecticut became the first state in the nation to enact a mattress recycling product stewardship law. Similar to the approach taken in Vermont, this law requires mattress manufacturers to fund and manage the recycling program. Once again, manufacturers will be allowed to charge a fee for this service, which will ultimately be paid by the consumer at the point-of-sale. The mattress industry is required to submit its stewardship plan to the State by July 1, 2014.

Also making news is the City of New York, which recently announced that it will soon embark on a voluntary residential food waste recycling program that is expected to become mandatory within a few years. City officials anticipate that 150,000 single-family homes, 100 high-rise buildings and 600 schools will participate in the voluntary program once underway. The City also plans to soon hire a composting plant to handle 100,000 tons of food scraps per year, which is the equivalent of 10% of the city's residential waste.

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<http://www.state.nj.us/dep/dshw/recycle/brbn03.htm>

[www.epa.gov/wastewise](http://www.epa.gov/wastewise)