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**NOTE:**  
For the latest information on recycling programs, please visit the Agency website at [www.ucrra.org](http://www.ucrra.org)

## Taking Another Look at Plastic Resin Code Standards

### Possible Changes Coming for Plastics Identification Symbols

You can find them today on signs, bins, products, packaging and more – those green arrows in a familiar, vaguely triangular, shape. They form the universal recycling symbol, which has become ingrained in the minds of individuals worldwide as the ultimate visual representation of the recycling process (collection, processing, and remanufacturing).

A variation of this recognizable symbol is particularly prevalent on plastic items, where a number appears in the center of the chasing arrows to indicate what type of resin the object is actually composed of. The Society of the Plastics Industry Inc. (SPI) developed this identification system in 1988 as an important tool for the sorting of plastics, helping to maintain the quality of recycled products by keeping different resins separated. Since then, the SPI system has served as the basis for the plastic resin identification

code used in 39 states, and has been adapted for various other applications worldwide.

Now, the SPI code has been adopted by ASTM International as the foundation for an updated plastics coding system intended for use as an international standard. While many of the old codes and guidelines have carried over, serious discussion is underway involving possible changes to the standard – changes that could make the codes easier to understand.

Currently, a large portion of the general public finds the SPI codes confusing, especially since not all types of plastic (even if marked with the chasing arrows) can be recycled in all areas. This confusion is primarily because the original SPI codes were implemented to identify different types of plastics, not to clarify what could and couldn't be recycled.

ASTM is considering possible changes, including adding descriptions or sub-codes for some

resin codes, especially those plastics marked as number seven. Number seven plastics are currently grouped as such simply because they don't belong in the other six categories. Another suggestion would remove the "chasing arrows" portion of the symbols entirely, since they typically imply that an item is recyclable, and not all plastics can be recycled in every local program. For example, plastic bags are not currently accepted in Ulster County's recycling program, even though many are marked with the chasing arrows recycling symbol and a resin code (such as a number two or number four). Plastic bags can be returned to certain retail and grocery stores for recycling per the New York State Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Act. For more details, visit the NYSDEC website at [www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/50034.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/50034.html)

The ASTM standards will continue to evolve as time passes, based on experience and input from those in the plastics and recycling industries. These alterations have the potential to help achieve the organization's ultimate goal, which is to make the resin identification symbols more user friendly for both everyday recyclers and industry insiders alike. For the latest information involving the development of these standards, visit the ASTM International website at [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org).

**Special Announcement:  
We're Going Paperless!**  
**REsource Issues Will Only Be Offered Electronically - E-Mail Addresses Needed**  
Reducing waste is a first step toward a sustainable future. To that end, and to conserve fiscal resources, all issues of the REsource will be available electronically by email and available on the Agency website at [www.ucrra.org](http://www.ucrra.org). Please send us an e-mail address by which we can notify you of our quarterly online issues. This e-mail address should be sent to [ucrra@ucrra.org](mailto:ucrra@ucrra.org). Thank you for recycling!



# Reduce and Reuse—Then Recycle

Emphasize and reward new programs that reduce consumption and waste saving money spent on supplies and trash disposal.

Then recycle what's left.

Try some of these tips to reduce waste and reuse materials at the office:

- Implement a company-wide double-sided copying policy.
- Distribute company bulletins by e-mail and post on a central bulletin board.
- Use technology to share, distribute and review business records and files.
- Reuse corrugated cardboard boxes, packaging peanuts, and plastic wrap to ship packages.
- Donate reusable furniture, computers, and office equipment to schools and charitable organizations.
- Reuse back of paper to print draft reports and documents or notepads.
- Set up an area for employees to

exchange desk and file organizers and other used items.

- Compost yard trimmings or ask your landscape contractor to compost them.
- Use a mulching lawnmower and leave grass clippings on the lawn.
- Reduce advertising mail by requesting your business be removed from mail lists.  
Send to: Direct Marketing Association  
Mail Preference Service, P.O. Box 9008,  
Farmingdale, NY 11735-9008



Become an Ulster County  
*Partner in Recycling* TODAY!

## **ATTENTION:**

**BUSINESS, TOWN & GOVERNMENT  
AGENCY, INSTITUTION, COMMERCIAL  
PROPERTY, NON-PROFIT AGENCY**

A major portion of the Ulster County solid waste stream is produced by business and industry. To meet the goals of the mandated Ulster County Source Separation and Recycling Law, and the Ulster County Solid Waste Management Plan, recycling programs must be implemented in commercial buildings and institutions as well as in residential neighborhoods.

*Environmental preservation is an issue of paramount importance to Ulster County residents.*

*Citizens want to know that the businesses they patronize recycle.*

*Partner In Recycling:* Just complete and submit your recycling plan to the Agency to become recognized as a recycling leader in our community. Your business will be listed on the Agency website, [www.ucrra.org](http://www.ucrra.org) as a *Partner In Recycling* after a review/approval of the plan.

*Waste Reduction & Recycling Plan:* To fill out a plan and to view the list of participating businesses in Ulster County, visit [www.ucrra.org/recycling/ucbusinessandproperty.html](http://www.ucrra.org/recycling/ucbusinessandproperty.html)



Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency: Recycling at the Materials Recovery Facility



*When pills or liquid medicines are poured down the sink or flushed down the toilet they remain diluted in the water supply after treatment and these trace amounts are suspected of causing a range of health problems, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).*

### Upcoming Pharmaceutical Waste Events

October 29, 2011  
10am to 2pm

**Sponsor: Kingston Police Dept.**

**Where:** 100 Plaza Road at Kingston Plaza in Hannaford Parking Lot

**Where:** 1 Garraghan Drive at Kingston Police Department

**Sponsor: New Paltz Police Department**

**Where:** 83 S. Putt Corners Road at New Paltz Police Station

**Where:** 263 Main St. at ShopRite Plaza in Parking Lot



# Pharmaceutical Waste & Health Concerns

Collecting Pharmaceutical Waste by creating take-back programs or collection events for expired or unwanted household medications has recently become the responsibility of both the solid waste industry and law enforcement.

Until recently, consumers have been told to flush unwanted medications. With technological advances and research, low levels of pharmaceutical waste are being found in our surface waters. We know that some medications pass largely unaltered through our wastewater treatment plants and enter rivers and other waters.

Although the health and environmental consequences are still being studied, the NYS-DEC reports that:

- **Flushed medications have been found in our lakes, rivers and streams**  
A nationwide study done in 1999 and 2000 by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) found low levels of drugs such as antibiotics, hormones, contraceptives and steroids in 80% of the rivers and streams tested.
- **Fish and other aquatic wildlife are being adversely affected**  
Studies have shown that male fish have been feminized (produced eggs) when exposed to hormones (birth control pills). Other drugs, such as antidepressants and beta-blockers, reduce fertility or affect spawning in certain aquatic organisms. Even expired medications can cause these effects.

- **Drug-resistant bacteria might develop**

Long-term exposure to low levels of antibiotics might result in the evolution of, or selection for, drug-resistant microbes and bacteria.

### Our local efforts

Over the past two years, the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency has held pharmaceutical collection events.

This new program represents the Agency's efforts to safeguard the public and the environment from the dangers associated with improper disposal of expired and unused medications. During this time, the Agency has collected a total of 1,470 lbs. of pharmaceutical waste for proper disposal.

## Holiday Tips: To Use Less Stuff

### **Holiday Meals**

- \* Purchase what food you need- plan ahead
- \* Prevent spoilage and waste- Store and preserve properly and freeze
- \* Compost leftover waste
- \* Don't shop on an empty stomach
- \* Use dishes, not paper plates unless you compost them
- \* If you use plastic utensils and plates, collect and reuse

- \* Purchase products in recyclable containers
- \* Get out family linens- napkins, tablecloths, launder after holidays
- \* Point out the ways your party demonstrates waste reduction and recycling, and SPREAD THE WORD!

### **Holiday Gift Giving**

- \* Enjoy the time with your family and friends!
- \* Plan ahead- avoid impulse buying
- \* Wrap gifts in newspaper (colored comics), or reuse gift-wrap and gift-bags
- \* Make the wrapping part of the gift, nice scarf, tea towel, handkerchiefs, etc.
- \* Gift family heirlooms – such as pictures, jewelry, household items, furniture
- \* Consider the impact of your gift:  
Is it environmentally friendly and safe for children? Will it be reusable? Is it recyclable or made from recycled materials?
- \* Give gift certificates for services such as hairdresser, car wash, oil change, or for personal services, such as doing the dishes for a week, raking the leaves, etc.
- \* Give consumable gifts that you know they like and need- stamps, cookies, etc.
- \* Purchase holiday cards made from recycled paper or make your own from items found around your home

- \* Help someone recycle. Give a set of recycling bins, a recycling cart, bin labels and instructions
- \* Give an experience: concert tickets, a ride on a train, a hot air balloon ride, sky-diving
- \* Create and give a family recipe book
- \* Give a starter garden: Seeds, gloves, tools, etc.
- \* Give a book on "How to Compost!" and a compost bin (available at UCRRRA)
- \* Give a bird feeder and seed
- \* Give a water-saving shower head
- \* Give yourself or your children time to simply enjoy the season!

### Christmas Trees

- \* Consider buying a potted Norfolk pine, fig tree or indoor houseplant that can be used every holiday season as your evergreen tree.
- \* Consider buying an artificial tree that can be reused every year
- \* Find out if your town takes donated trees. Some will shred the trees and allow contributing citizens pick up mulch later.
- \* When sunk into private fish ponds, trees make excellent refuge and feeding areas for fish.



## Spotlight on Batteries



Batteries are in everything these days. We need them to watch TV, drive cars, answer our phones and for some of us... brush our teeth! The great thing about batteries is that they allow us the convenience of power without the inconvenience of plugging into an outlet. But like most power sources, the life of each battery must some day come to an end. So what do we do with all those spent alkaline batteries? What about car batteries? Cell phone and camera batteries? Before we can answer those questions,

we must first recognize that not all batteries are alike. In fact, there are 3 main categories in which most batteries fall: Alkaline, Rechargeable and Button-Cell.

The first battery type we will discuss is **Alkaline Batteries** (A, AA, AAA, C, D, 9V). These types of batteries are often referred to as single-use or household batteries. We commonly find them around the house in remote controls, flashlights and toys. Alkaline batteries contain steel, zinc and manganese and are not considered hazardous to the environment if made after 1996 due to federal legislation called the Mercury Containing and Battery Management Act, which phased out the use of mercury. This means that you can safely throw away all those batteries you were stock piling in your garage. However, it does not mean that these types of batteries can't be recycled. As we know, steel and zinc are valuable metals and can be remade into a variety of things. There is currently a debate surrounding whether recycling alkaline batteries is better for the environment than trashing them. The problem is that when all things are considered, the environmental impact to ship and process batteries may be worse than recycling them.

These batteries are collected for free recycling at the Household Hazardous Waste Collection events held multiple times throughout the year; typically in the spring, summer and fall.

**Rechargeable batteries** (Ni-Cad, Li-Ion, Lead Acid) make up the next grouping and are considered hazardous because of the heavy metals contained within. Most of these types of batteries can be found in cell phones, laptop computers, digital cameras, cars, boats and various battery back-ups. Rechargeable batteries can be used for longer periods of time before disposal is required. The good news is that an organization called the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation has made recycling options plentiful for most rechargeable battery types. You can visit their website, [www.call2recycle.org/](http://www.call2recycle.org/), input your zip code and find the closest location for recycling. Lead acid batteries are not accepted through the Rechargeable Battery Recycling Corporation but can be brought back to the place where they were purchased or installed. Lead acid batteries can also be taken to any of the Household Hazardous Waste events for free recycling.

**Button Cell Batteries** (Silver Oxide, Lithium, Alkaline) make up our last grouping of battery types and are commonly found in watches, hearing aids, calculators and some children's toys. When identifying the type of button cell battery you may have, please be sure to differentiate between silver oxide and lithium or alkaline batteries. These batteries are identified by an alphanumeric code. Typically the first letter in the alphanumeric code will identify the type of battery. The first letter 'L' indicates an alkaline or lithium battery. Silver Oxide Batteries are identified by a letter 'S' and contain mercury. Button Cell batteries containing mercury can be taken to any Household Hazardous Waste event for recycling. If you have questions or comments on batteries or any other types of materials, please contact the Recycling Coordinator at (845) 336-3336 or by email at [ucrra@ucrra.org](mailto:ucrra@ucrra.org)

## Household Hazardous Waste Collection Events

The Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event, which is partially funded by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, was created to bring hazardous waste disposal services into the community and to provide a drop off location for Ulster County residents. By offering alternatives for the safe disposal of household hazardous waste, the Ulster County Resource Recovery Agency is taking a proactive role in protecting the environment by preventing these items from ending up in landfills or contaminating water sources and wastewater treatment plants. These FREE events are held multiple times throughout the year. Visit the Agency website, [www.ucrra.org](http://www.ucrra.org) or call the Recycling Hotline at (845) 336-3336 to request more information or to make an appointment for an upcoming event.

### HHW Collection Events—2011 Summary

- 120,276** lbs. of electronics for recycling
- 1,495** gallons of hazardous paint – oil based, varnishes, stains
- 985** gallons of pesticides (liquids)
- 3,200** lbs. of pesticides (solids)
- 1,180** lbs. of fluorescent bulbs
- 37** lbs. of mercury containing devices
- 8,718** lbs. of other HHW (solids)– includes calcium carbide, resins and adhesives, aerosols, flares, oxidizers and asbestos
- 2,841** gallons of other HHW (liquids)– includes cyanide solution, flammable organic liquids, oxidizers, caustics, acids, ammonia & organic peroxides
- 1,900** lbs. of automotive batteries
- 850** lbs. household batteries (i.e. alkaline, Ni-Cad, Li-Ion)
- 1,100** lbs. of pharmaceutical waste was collected and brought to the DCRRRA Waste-to-Energy Facility for witnessed destruction
- 1,160** total participants

### Trash Trivia

The average American family consumes 182 gallons of soda, 29 gallons of juice, 104 gallons of milk, and 26 gallons of bottled water a year.

If every American household recycled just one milk jug, 200 million pounds of plastic would be kept out of the landfill.



## Your Stuff, Climate Change and Waste



How much we consume has a direct impact on the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that are produced. When we buy more and new products, our consumption sets off a chain of events that produce greenhouse gas emissions, from extracting raw materials for the manufacture of products to the amount of waste to be managed when we no longer want them.



Fewer greenhouse gases are produced when we prevent waste by buying less, or buy goods and services that have less impact on the environment. As consumers, we are in the middle of this process and we can change it through our consumption choices. Fewer harmful greenhouse gas emissions are produced when we prevent waste in the first place by consuming less, reusing what we have and recycling and composting more.

## Tips for Living the Green Life

### Get on Your Bike

**Every mile you ride your bike instead of driving your car avoids the production of about one pound of carbon dioxide.**

### Save a Tree, or Two or Three

**Look for paper products with high recycled content. If every household in the U.S. replaced one box of 85-sheet virgin fiber facial tissues with 100% recycled ones, 87,700 trees and 31 million gallons of water would be saved and 5,300 tons of pollution avoided.**

### Reduce Garbage

**Buy products with less packaging and recycle paper, plastic, metal and glass. You can save around 1,000 lbs. of carbon dioxide per year by reducing, reusing and recycling. To save even more, consider home composting (visit [www.ucrra.org](http://www.ucrra.org) for more information).**

### Check Your Water Heater

**Reduce the thermostat from 140°F to 120°F and save 550 pounds of carbon dioxide per year.**

### Stop "Leaking" Energy

**75% of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the devices are turned off. Stop this "leak" by plugging your devices into a power strip and shutting it off when the devices are not in use.**

### Use Powdered Detergents

**Laundry liquids are approximately 80% water. It costs energy and packaging to bring this water to consumers.**



# Got Recycling Questions? Ask Rudy...

Dear Rudy,

Do they really make plastic lumber out of recycled plastic film and milk jugs? Sounds like your deck could become a Slip-n-Slide when it's wet. Seems kind of dangerous, don't you think?

-Slip Woodsy



Dear Rudy,

My company is buying a new copier. I want to make sure that we get one that uses as little energy as possible to benefit the environment and save on my electricity bill. What do you suggest I do?

-Kopy Kat

Dear Woodsy,

Some plastic lumber is manufactured with a wood texture, some is mixed with wood waste. Many plastic lumber products have a paraffin base, and just like surf boards that are waxed for traction, it becomes less slippery when wet. Plastic lumber is also stain-resistant, can be cut, drilled and sanded like real wood, but won't rot, crack, split or warp. So hang ten, keep recycling and try plastic lumber on your next decking project.

## Got Recycling Questions??

Just send an email with your question to [mleg@ucrra.org](mailto:mleg@ucrra.org). Thank you for recycling!

Dear Kat,

Look for resource-efficient office equipment with the Energy Star label. You can find it at the same place purchased your current equipment. Large companies may want to use a dealer to buy or lease their equipment. Smaller businesses may prefer buying direct from an office supply retailer.

# WHAT CAN I RECYCLE IN ULSTER COUNTY?

## ACCEPTABLE ITEMS

### PAPER PRODUCTS

- Newspapers
- Magazines & Catalogs
- Computer / Copy / Fax Paper
- Writing / Ledger Paper
- Phonebooks
- Junk Mail  
(including envelopes, coupons, ads & inserts)
- Wrapping Paper
- Greeting Cards
- All Thin Cardboard  
(including cereal, pasta, cracker and other food boxes, shoe boxes, tissue boxes, paper egg cartons, soda & beer packaging)
- Corrugated Cardboard & Brown Paper Bags

**NOTE:** Flatten cardboard. Do not tie together, keep loose. No wax or plastic coated paper products

### COMMINGLED PRODUCTS

- Aluminum Cans
- Tin Cans / Containers
- Glass Bottles
- Glass Jars
- Plastic Bottles (shampoo, water, soda)
- Plastic Tubs (yogurt, cottage cheese)
- Plastic Jugs (milk, juice)

**TIP:** Look for the code on the bottom of the container. If it is:

- PET #1
- HDPE #2,
- LDPE #4
- PP #5, or
- Other #7



then it is recyclable!

**NOTE:** Remove caps. Rinse all containers. No caps! Lids are acceptable.

## NOT ACCEPTED

- Paper Towels, Facial Tissues, Napkins
- Waxed or Plastic Coated Paper or Boxes
- Food-contaminated Material
- Pizza Boxes
- Foil Wrapping Paper
- Plastic Bags
- Prescription Bottles
- Plastic Food Wrap
- Potato Chip or Sandwich Bags
- Black Microwavable Plastic Containers
- Styrofoam
- Automotive Fluid Bottles
- Petroleum
- Herbicide or Pesticide Containers
- Light Bulbs
- Flower Vases
- Drinking Glasses
- Window / Broken Glass
- Scrap Metal
- Foil or Pie Plates



For information on items not shown, please contact the Recycling Hotline at (845) 336-3336 or visit our website at [www.ucrra.org](http://www.ucrra.org)