

Fast Facts About Plastic Loose Fill*

1. Plastic loose fill can be reused.
 2. Over 30% of all EPS loose fill is reused.
 3. The minimum recycled content in EPS loose fills is 25%.
 4. Post-consumer recycled-content EPS loose fill is sold throughout the United States.
 5. There are over 1,500 collection sites for EPS loose fill in the US.
 6. 50% of collection centers' loose fill needs are met with reusable loose fill donated by consumers.
 7. EPS loose fill is non-toxic, inert and made without chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).
 8. EPS loose fill is less than 1/4 of 1% of landfill volume.
 9. EPS loose fill is over 99.6% air.
 10. It takes 40% to 50% less energy to make EPS loose fill than to make a comparable amount of paper packaging.
 11. Atmospheric emissions from the production of polystyrene are only 1/2 to 1/3 of those from paper production.
 12. Waste water volume from polystyrene production is 1/3 of that resulting from producing a comparable amount of paper.
- *Plastic loose fill is packing peanuts made from expanded polystyrene (EPS) plastic.*



Plastic Loose Fill Council

P.O. Box 21040
Oakland, CA 94620
510/654-0756

Peanut Hotline
800/828-2214

Visit our Web site:
www.loosefillpackaging.com

*For recycling information about
molded or block EPS packaging*

contact:

Alliance of Foam Packaging Recyclers
2128 Espey Court, Suite 4
Crofton, MD 21114
410/451-8340
800/944-8448

20% Post Consumer Waste

PLASTIC FOAM LOOSE FILL

AND THE ENVIRONMENT

the other side of the story

PEANUT HOTLINE
800-828-2214

www.loosefillpackaging.com

Plastic Loose Fill Council

FP International
Redwood City, CA

Inter-Pac, Inc.
Tupelo, MS

RAPAC, Inc.
Oakland, TN

Storopack, Inc.
Cincinnati, OH

The Solid Waste Issue

Solid waste disposal is one of the biggest environmental challenges the country faces. American municipalities have access to fewer landfills and must meet tougher disposal laws than twenty five years ago. Yet we're generating more solid waste than ever before - over 1400 pounds of trash each year for every person in America. Clearly, we can't ignore this problem.

The issue of expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam and its relationship to the solid waste crisis is one in which the facts often are not fully understood.

Degradability Concerns

There have been some efforts to restrict the manufacture, use, and disposal of EPS loose fill. We believe these actions arise from false perceptions about our product.

The concept of degradability is at the heart of the controversy regarding the disposability of EPS products. Many people assume that because EPS foam doesn't degrade rapidly, it must be a major problem in landfills.

It's true that EPS products do not degrade in landfills, but neither do paper, food waste, and other so-called "degradable" materials. Instead, they mummify in the oxygen-deprived or anaerobic environment of modern landfills.

Modern landfills are actually designed to minimize biodegradation in order to prevent the generation of methane gas and leachate (liquid run-off) which can cause ground water contamination.

Studies conducted by the University of Arizona's Garbage Project support our belief that plastic packaging does not contribute unduly to the solid waste problem. Researchers found that paper waste is the largest single component of landfills - 50% by volume compared to 10% for plastics.

EPS and the "three R's"

When it comes to reducing solid waste, we have made the adage, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, an industry commitment.

REDUCE means minimizing the materials used to make a product and any materials which are left over after its use. Modern technology makes it possible to manufacture high-performance EPS loose fill with 50% less polystyrene than that produced in 1974. And, thanks to the highly efficient cushioning characteristics of EPS loose fill, less is needed to protect merchandise in transit. Shippers who use other cushioning products, have to use more and heavier material to achieve the quality of protection of EPS loose fill. Reduced shipping weight benefits everyone. Altogether, in form and function, EPS loose fill is source-reduction at its best. But, that is only part of the story.

REUSE means extending the life of a product. The durability and resiliency of EPS loose fill makes it suitable for repeated reuse. Since 1991, our national toll-free "Peanut Hotline," 800-828-2214, directs consumers to hundreds of businesses across the country which reuse EPS loose fill. Thousands of individuals call the Hotline each month and new collection centers enroll daily - contributing to the success of one of America's most unique and extensive privately-funded environmental networks.

RECYCLE means to incorporate used materials in new products. EPS manufacturers routinely recycle EPS from consumers and from factories to make new products. On average, EPS loose fills are manufactured with approximately 25% recycled content. Recycling of EPS packaging material is a highly energy efficient means of diverting post-consumer waste from landfills. Recycling a pound of plastic requires only 1000 BTU's as compared to the 11,500 BTU's required for recycling the same amount of paper.

The Energy It Takes

The production of all EPS products utilizes by-products of the petroleum and natural gas industry. A small fraction of 1% of all petroleum and natural gas consumed in the U.S. is used for all of the EPS packaging products made in America. And loose fill alone is only a small percentage of all EPS packaging. EPS loose fill takes less energy to produce than alternative fillers made from paper. And new technology has made it possible to make lighter EPS loose fills; and, therefore, use 24% less energy in production than before.

Light Weight & Lower Cost

Besides the environmental advantages of EPS loose fill, it is also a better economic choice for most shippers. That helps contain costs passed on to customers. Packaging cost audits show that EPS loose fill can cost as much as 40% less than other packaging materials in overall packaging and shipping expenses. The EPS loose fill in a box is over 99.6% air.

PEANUT HOTLINE

More Americans are now taking time to separate their garbage and recover what is useful or recyclable. The Plastic Loose Fill Council's program for reusing packing peanuts has delivered real savings for the environment. Peanut Hotline collection site businesses report that consumer-donated reusable loose fill results in a savings to them of nearly 50% on the purchase of new packaging fills. When you have more EPS loose fill than you can use at home, call our Peanut Hotline at:

8 0 0 - 8 2 8 - 2 2 1 4

The Peanut Hotline will direct you to businesses willing to accept used EPS loose fill for their own packaging needs. These collection sites are typically small packaging or gift shops. They welcome the free packaging material and the customer referrals.

www.loosefillpackaging.com

Contact us at our Web site. You will find Peanut Hotline information, product information, and other current news about our industry.