



ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERABLE FOOD PACKAGING ORDINANCE

Effective November 2, 2009

Frequently Asked Questions

What does the Ordinance Require?

- All retail food vendors, restaurants, and City facilities can no longer provide prepared or take-out food in, on or with disposable food packaging that contains Styrofoam.
- Biodegradable food packaging is required when using disposable food packaging, which includes cold cups, plates, hinge containers, bowls, trays, cartons, cups, cutlery, straws, lids, bags.

What's Wrong with Styrofoam?

- Styrene, a compound in Styrofoam, is a known hazardous substance and a suspected carcinogen. It leaches from containers into the food or liquid it contains, and is detectable in the tissue of every man, woman and child in the U.S.
- In California, 165,000 tons of Styrofoam are used for food packaging annually.
- Styrofoam “can have serious impacts on human health, wildlife, the environment, and the economy,” according to EPA.
- Styrofoam does not bio-degrade and there is no meaningful recycling of Styrofoam.
- The polystyrene manufacturing process is

the 5th largest creator of hazardous waste, and ranks second in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Which Containers are Allowed?

- **Durable Ware:** The best choice for the environment is re-use, so consider washable food service whenever possible.
- **Uncoated Paper and Coated Paper** (if coating is BPI certified)
- **Cardboard**
- **Bio-plastics** and compostables, certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI). See reverse side for sources.



Do the Alternatives Cost More?

In many cases, the environmentally preferable alternatives are the same cost as the conventional products, and in some cases, they cost less. For alternatives that are more expensive, a small “take-out” fee can cover the cost of eco-friendly containers. Exemptions can be made if the environmentally friendly alternative costs 15% or more than the conventional choice (although Styrofoam is *always* prohibited). Contact Carol Misseldine at the number on the reverse if you wish to be considered for an exemption.

What are the Penalties for Non-Compliance?

The first violation is \$100, 2nd violation is \$200, and \$500 for each additional violation.

Sources for Environmentally Preferable Alternatives

Ask your sales representative if they have acceptable containers. If not, ask them to begin carrying them. Below are some of the many sources of environmentally preferable disposable food packaging.

| Company | Website and Contact | City, State | Products |
|---------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|---|
| Excellent Packaging | www.excellentpackaging.com | Richmond, CA | Bowls, plates, cups, soup containers, utensils |
| World Centric | http://worldcentric.org | Palo Alto, CA | Bowls, plates, cups, , clamshells, utensils |
| Green Earth Office Supply | http://greenearthofficesupply | Redwood Estates & Santa Clara, CA | Bowls, plates, cups, soup containers, utensils, straws, trash bags, stir sticks |
| Greentooth | http://www.green-tooth.com/ ; liz@green-tooth.com , 650-483-8255 | San Mateo, CA | Cups, bowls, plates, trays, pan liners, bag, utensils |
| Mr. Take Out Bags | www.mrtakeoutbags.com | Pittsburgh, PA | Bags, plates, cups, cutlery, lids |
| Let's Go Green | http://letsgogreen.biz | Snellville, GA | Cups, soup containers |
| Food Service Warehouse | www.foodservicewarehouse.com | Greenwood Village, CO | Cups, bowls, plates, cutlery, napkins, straws |
| Aardvark Paper Straws | http://www.aardvarkstraws.com/ | Ft. Wayne, IN | Straws, stir sticks |

Companies listed are for reference only. The City of Mill Valley does not endorse any specific business.

A complete listing of products certified by Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) can be found here: <http://www.bpiworld.org/BPI-Public/Approved/2.html>

Who can you contact for more information?

Carol Misseldine
Mill Valley Sustainability Director
(415) 388-5273
cmisseldine@cityofmillvalley.org
<http://www.cityofmillvalley.org>