



PETCO Basic Collectors Guide

Aim of the Guide: To assist people making a living from collecting recyclables and in particular household generated (post-consumer) PET plastic, by providing information that adds value to their collection initiatives.

What is PET plastic?

PET (short for the chemical name “Polyethylene terephthalate”) is the type of plastic labelled with the # 1 “polymer identification code” (in a triangle) on or near the bottom of bottles and containers. It is recognisable as an imprint on containers (either transparent, or white or any other colour) used to package bottled water, fizzy drinks, sports drinks, water, juice, household cleaners and food trays.

In South Africa empty, discarded PET bottles are collected, then flattened and bundled up into big blocks (baled) and delivered to the recycling plant where they are colour sorted, washed, chopped into smaller particles (granulated), re-washed, and extruded (melted down and then made into long thin strings of plastic that look like noodles). Those strings are then cut into small pieces (pellets) and are sold to manufacturers where they are reprocessed into a number of items we enjoy every day including polyester fibre filling for our pillows, sleeping bags and winter coats, carpets in cars, fleece shirts, but most importantly as recycled PET containers containing a percentage of recycled content and even bottles.

Why collect and recycle PET Plastics?

PET is technically 100% recyclable. It is lightweight and strong and can be transported efficiently and is superior compared to other packaging options with regards to its environmental footprint linked to energy demand in production and resulting Greenhouse Gas (GHG). Emissions

When recycled PET can further greatly reduce fuel use, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. PET recycling creates jobs by providing a source of income and helps to save the planet’s virgin resources.

The PET that is removed from the waste stream results in less waste going to landfill sites and reduces the amount of natural resources needed to make certain products, thereby reducing the



Plastic bottles are not trash

impact on the Earth and environment. Recycling of PET fits very well into the concept of the Circular Economy, and closed loop thinking which looks at a cradle-to-cradle approach and aims to design waste out of a system by ensuring that waste from one product or process becomes a resource for another. This reduces the need for additional resource use and eliminates waste from the outset.

RECYCLING FACTS: DID YOU KNOW?

- 1 recycled plastic bottle saves enough energy to power a 60-watt incandescent light bulb for 3 hours.
- Five 2-liter recycled PET bottles produce enough fibrefill to make a winter jacket.
- The energy saved by recycling one plastic bottle will power a computer for 25minutes.
- Recycling 10 tons of PET plastic saves as much greenhouse gas emissions as removing more than three cars from the road for one year.

Identifying PET

Check that the container is labelled with the #1 code or the PET resin identification symbol (the number 1 in the chasing arrows forming a triangle)

Check that there is a nib at the bottom of the PET bottle and NOT a seam or a handle (otherwise it is NOT a PET bottle)



This is a PET bottle



This is not a PET bottle

Separating and sorting PET bottles

Good quality in = good quality out! Get the best price from recyclers for your collected PET bottles by:

- Collecting PET bottles and containers with screw-neck tops only (see picture)
- Sorting according to colour i.e. separate your clear and blue; green and brown PET bottles
- Flattening bottles (squash them) - do not flake, shred or grind them!



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- Remove the caps, closures and rings from bottles on the bottles but keep them in a separate bag - these are made from different plastic type material such as Polypropylene (PP) and other types. They can be sorted and sold separately
- Making sure bottles and containers that are collected for recycling are dry and clean (completely free of contents/ contaminants)
- Do not mix PET bottles with other recyclable materials.
- Remove the shrink-sleeve
- Remove any caps or closures that are made from metal

Be aware- do not collect

		
<p>Dark (non-transparent, purple, navy blue, black) or neon coloured bottles</p>	<p>Bottles with print directly on the plastic</p>	<p>Multi-layered bottles ie number 7's, or wine bottles</p>
		
<p>PVC/ PET shrink wrap labelled bottles unless those labels are easily removable (you must take them off!)</p>	<p>PET trays and punnets (they are <u>currently</u> not being recycled yet in South Africa on a large-scale).</p>	<p>PET bottles with metal caps/lids and closures. These must be removed!</p>

Who is PETCO and how do we support

PETCO is the national industry body responsible for managing the PET industry's extended producer responsibility (EPR) in South Africa. Our mission is to grow the collection and recycling of PET bottles after consumer use. We have done this for a decade and are funded by a voluntary recycling levy paid by industry. We invest all our funds in ensuring and encouraging visible recycling, through

- contracting and financing PET recyclers who collect bottles, process them into rPET in preparation for the manufacture of new products,
- consumer education and awareness (including schools and community groups),
- training and joint venture projects (including those with municipalities),

- equipment support and sponsorship (for collectors), and
- providing guidance relating to design for recycling (for industry).

We do this by way of partnerships and working to a five to ten-year plan with clearly defined targets. PETCO has a solid record of accomplishment in the recovery and recycling of PET, adopting a holistic approach that focuses on the entire recycled PET value chain. Its experience is in the design and implementation of systems to boost and sustain the collection and recycling of PET, accompanied by supporting interventions that address the concomitant challenges of unemployment and poor general awareness of the benefits of recycling.

How can PETCO help you?

PETCO assesses projects on an annual basis with a view to providing assistance. Our ability to assist depends on the merits and viability of a project, its sustainability, the need in the area that the project operations from, as well as how it fits in to the PETCO strategic objectives and budget available at the time. All potential projects are assessed internally and then tabled with the board for approval.

Type of assistance provided for Entry Level Collectors:

Equipment

- Bulk bags
- Bins (various sizes)
- Trolleys
- Protective equipment, gloves, boots and overalls

Operational support

- Put you in contact with buy-back centres and intermediate collectors in your area.
- Provide assistance with setting up a cooperative

Education

- Workshops & training

What is PET plastic?



PET is the short name for **Polyethylene Terephthalate**, the type of plastic labelled with the #1 polymer identification code (in a triangle) on or near the bottom of bottles and containers. It is recognisable as an imprint on containers (transparent, clear and/or tinted or any other solid colour). PET is mainly used for **beverage bottles** for (bottled water, carbonated soft drinks, milk, juice, sports and energy drinks), **bottles** for household, personal care and pharmaceutical products **jars, punnets, tubs and trays** for food items, as well as **sheet and film** for packaging.

In South Africa empty, thrown away PET bottles are collected, then flattened and bundled up into big blocks (baled) and delivered to the recycling plant where they are colour sorted, washed, chopped into smaller particles (granulated), re-washed, and extruded (melted down and then made into long thin strings of plastic). Those strings are then cut into small pieces (pellets), before those are then re-used (as recycled plastics) for making a number of items we enjoy every day including fiber filling for our pillows, sleeping bags and winter coats, carpets in cars, fleece shirts but most importantly as recycled PET containers.



Plastic bottles are not trash

Once recycled, from either pre-consumer (such as factory off-cuts) or post-consumer (household) material sources, it is called rPET or Recycled Polyethylene Terephthalate.

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The PET that is removed from the waste stream results in less waste going to landfill sites and reduces the amount of natural resources needed to make certain products, thereby reducing the impact on the Earth and environment. Recycling of PET fits very well into the concept of the Circular Economy, and closed loop thinking which looks at a cradle-to-cradle approach and aims to design waste out of a system by ensuring that waste from one product or process becomes a resource for another. This reduces the need for additional resource use and eliminates waste from the outset.

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PETCO is a Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO) responsible for managing the PET industry's Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) in South Africa. Our mission is to grow the collection and recycling of PET bottles after consumer use. We have done this for over 15 years and are funded by a mandatory EPR fees paid by Producers on the PET plastic that they place on the market¹. We invest all our funds in ensuring and encouraging visible recycling, through:

¹ For more information on Section 18 Legislation: <https://petco.co.za/section-18-everything-you-need-to-know/>



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- Contracting and financing PET recyclers who collect bottles, process them into rPET in preparation for the manufacture of new products
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- Equipment support and sponsorship (for collectors), and
- Providing guidance relating to Design for Circularity (for industry).

PETCO offers educational material such as posters and PET collection bags for events that detail the PET recycling process. PETCO can also assist with putting you in touch with a collector or collection agency in your area (email supportservices@petco.co.za). You can also apply to hire banners to be returned after any specific collection or recycling school or community event.

Contact PETCO for further information

Call toll free:	0860 147 738 (0860 1 is PET)
Email:	info@petco.co.za
Twitter	PETCO_SA
Facebook:	PETPlasticRecyclingSA
Instagram:	PETCO_SA
LinkedIn:	PETCO, the South African PET Plastic Recycling Company
YouTube:	PETCO South Africa
Website:	www.petco.co.za

Useful contacts

Visit www.petco.co.za for a list of collection points, drop off sites and buy-back centres.

You could also contact some other industry bodies for general assistance or information about other material streams. Here are some of them, but you could also visit PETCO's website to download a fact sheet with useful contacts:

- SA Packaging Association www.pacsa.co.za
- Institute of Waste Management www.iwmsa.co.za
- National Recycling Forum www.recycling.co.za
- Packaging SA www.packagingsa.co.za
- Recycle Paper ZA www.recyclepaper.co.za/
- Polystyrene Packaging Council (PSPC) www.polystyrenepackaging.co.za/
- ROSE Foundation www.rosefoundation.org.za
- SAVA www.savynyls.co.za
- Tetra Pak www.tetrapak.com/za
- The Glass Recycling Company www.glassrecyclingcompany.co.za
- Collect-a-Can www.collectacan.co.za



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