

Basic collectors guide

Aim of the Guide: To assist people making a living from collecting recyclables in particular household generated (post-consumer) such as PET plastic and their associated labels and closures (caps) as well as Liquid Board Packaging (LBP), by providing information that adds value to their collection initiatives. The following guide is specifically catered for Petco's identified products for which it offers an EPR scheme.

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 recognizable 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 along with their labels and closures 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 small particles (granulated), re-washed to ensure that the labels and closures are separated from the PET plastic bottle, and extruded (melted down and then made into long thin string of plastics 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 (rPET) containers containing a percentage of recycled content and even bottles.

Why collect and recycle PET plastics?

Well-designed PET packaging is technically 100% recyclable. It is lightweight and strong and can be transported efficiently.

When recycled, PET creates income opportunities and can greatly reduce fuel use, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. 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 the environment.

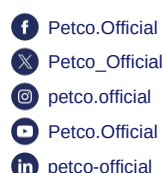
Recycling of PET fits well into the concept of the Circular Economy and closed-loop thinking which looks at a cradle-to-cradle approach and aims to design waste out of a system by ensuring that recyclable materials from one product or process become a resource for another. This reduces the need for additional resources and eliminates waste from the outset.

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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).



Please see below for the different polymer identification codes for the different types of plastic ([learn more here](#)):

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
PET Polyethylene terephthalate	HDPE High-density polyethylene	PVC Polyvinyl chloride	LDPE Low density polyethylene	PP Polypropylene	PS Polystyrene	OTHER Other types of plastics
PET is commonly used in commercially sold water bottles, soft drink bottles, sports drink bottles and condiment bottles.	HDPE is commonly used in milk and juice bottles, detergent bottles, shampoo bottles, grocery bags and cereal box liners.	PVC can be flexible or rigid, and is used for plumbing pipes, clear food packaging, shrink wrap, plastic children's toys, tablecloths, vinyl flooring and blister packs.	LDPE is used for dry cleaning bags, bread bags, newspaper bags, produce bags, "paper" milk cartons and hot/cold beverage cups.	PP is used to make yogurt containers, deli food containers, furniture, luggage and winter clothing insulation.	PS is used for toys, rigid packaging, refrigerator trays and CD cases. Also used to form Expanded Polystyrene EPS used for take out containers, cups/plates and packing chips.	Any plastic item not made from 1-6 plastics is lumped together as a number 7 plastic and is used for things like CD's, baby bottles and headlight lens.

Image 1: Source: molygran



Separating and sorting PET

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

- Collect PET bottles and leave the caps on
- Flatten the PET bottle or container (squash them) – do not flake, shred or grind them.
- Separate wet waste (food) and dry recyclables from each other.
- Make sure all recyclable materials that are collected for recycling are dry and as clean as possible (completely free of contents/contaminants). PET bottles filled with paint, nails, straws or chip packets and chocolate wrappers are not recyclable and contaminate the recycling value chain.
- Sort recyclable materials by material type i.e. keep all PET bottles and containers together (separated by colour).
- Remove all shrink-sleeves that are not marked as being recyclable. Shrink sleeves that are made from PET (#1) and PVC (#3) will contaminate the recycling value chain.

Be aware – do not collect

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



What is Liquid Board Packaging?

Liquid Board Packaging (LBP) is a multi-layer paperboard material that contains layers of polyethylene (plastic), aluminium and paper. LBP is commonly referred to as “liquid board cartons”. These cartons are widely used to package milk, juice, custard and 1-litre wine cartons.

The paper component of liquid board cartons is mainly made from renewable sources. In sustainably-managed forests, the harvested trees are replaced with new ones. These forests help to keep carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere while producing renewable wood because the carbon remains locked in the wood and products made from it (such as paper or liquid board cartons).

Liquid board cartons are 100% recyclable. Instead of the liquid board cartons ending up as waste in South African landfills, many are being recycled for reuse. These items are lightweight and cost-effective to transport, which makes them an affordable packaging choice. They have an excellent product-to-packaging ratio, meaning that there is a large amount of product compared to the packaging material. This means less waste and more convenience such as for storage at home.

Paper manufacturers use the long paper fibre contents of used liquid board cartons to manufacture new paper and carton products, while the other layers (polyAl layers) are recycled into products such as plastic pallets, milk crates, clothes hangers, outdoor furniture, school desks and building materials. Because they are made of renewable and recyclable materials, they represent a responsible environmental choice.

Identifying Liquid Board Packaging?





This is not a liquid board carton:



Be aware – SEPARATE your Tetra Pak cartons from the below cartons and cups

Keep paper cups out of your liquid board carton collections	Keep Beer, Inkomazi and Mageu cartons separate from Tetra Pak carton collections. These cartons have the potential to contaminate Tetra Pak collections.

Sorting liquid board cartons

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

- Collect liquid board cartons, keep the cap on and ensure that the straws are pushed into the package.
- Flatten the cartons (squash them) – do not flake, shred or grind them.
- Separate wet waste (food) and dry recyclables from each other.



- Make sure all recyclable materials that are collected for recycling are dry and as clean as possible (completely free of contents/contaminants).
- Sort recyclable materials by material type i.e. keep all cartons together).

What is liquid board packaging recycling?

Liquid board cartons are designed to be recycled wherever collection systems are in place. Liquid board cartons along with their closures are collected then flattened and bundled up into big blocks (bales) and delivered to a recycling plant where they are placed into a hydro pulper, which mixes the cartons with water breaking the material down into small pieces. The paper is then separated from the plastic/polyethylene, the lids and the aluminium.

The paper fibres are cleaned, pressed, dried and then formed into paper rolls for paper towels and cardboard packaging. The plastic and aluminium components are extracted together and formed into granules which can be turned into various products such as pallets or roof tiles. The lids can also be recycled into plastic drums, pipes, and outdoor furniture.

Who is Petco?

Petco Producer Responsibility Organisation NPC is a Producer Responsibility Organisation (PRO), incorporated in 2004, that administers Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) schemes on behalf of its members for various identified products in the packaging sector. Petco serves as a national organisation responsible for driving recycling activities, unlocking the collection and recycling value chain, guiding product design, stimulating end-use markets for recycled material, carrying out education and awareness initiatives and building the required local recycling infrastructure and capacity.

Petco is a collective organisation, set up and owned by our producer members to fulfil their extended producer responsibility obligations, by taking accountability for their products throughout its entire life cycle, as mandated by Section 18 of the National Environmental Management: Waste Act. Petco is committed to driving change towards a circular economy in South Africa's packaging industry.

How can Petco help you?

Petco assesses projects on an annual basis with a view to provide assistance. Our ability to assist depends on the merits and viability of a project, its sustainability, the need in the area that the project operates from, as well as how it fits into Petco's strategic objectives and the 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 and Awareness

- Workshops and training

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:

Institute of Waste Management	www.iwmsa.co.za
National Recycling Forum	www.recycling.co.za
Packaging SA	www.packagingsa.co.za
Plastics SA	www.plasticsinfo.co.za
Recycle Paper ZA	www.recyclepaper.co.za/
POLYCO	www.polyco.co.za
ROSE Foundation	www.rosefoundation.org.za
SAVA	www.savinyls.co.za
Tetra Pak	www.tetrapak.com/za
The Glass Recycling Company	www.glassrecyclingcompany.co.za
Collect-a-Can	www.collectacan.co.za

Contact Petco

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