

Facilities

Board of Trustees Policy

SUBJECT: Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives Policy	NUMBER: 4.13
	DATE: May 13, 2024 Resolution #24-XX
	SUPERSEDES: None – New Policy

This policy document directly relates to the Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives Policy, of the SUNY Schenectady Board of Trustees, as hereto attached.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The State University of New York issued policy 5201, Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives, effective March 5, 2024 for all SUNY Campuses, which are required to have their own Policies and Procedures in place by June 30, 2024.

The Office of Administration is responsible for implementing, monitoring, and maintaining this policy.

PURPOSE

SUNY Schenectady County Community College ("SUNY Schenectady," or "The College") is committed to respecting and protecting the environment and rights of all persons as part of the environment. To this endeavor, in terms of efficiency, sustainability, cost and security as it relates to single use plastics reduction, the College has instituted this policy to comply with existing state procurement law and set practical and attainable requirements for its campus, and affiliated organizations, to eliminate the use of plastic items generally recognized as being designed for single use.

While the SUNY policy provides for a timeline in which to implement this policy, the College, to the best of its ability, believes it can comply with SUNY's directive by the end of its current academic year, by prioritizing and eliminating all single use plastics and preference for durable and reusable alternatives, with noted exemptions where alternatives may not be available and the purpose is for the health, safety, wellbeing of the College Community, or for bio, health, scientific, culinary, and any other College education delivery.

Annually, the College will conduct a campus wide climate survey as to the adherence to this policy.

POLICY

The College will eliminate the use of disposable products where practical and, where elimination is not practical, replace single use plastic products with BPI certified compostable products.

The College will establish effective measurement and verification processes and continually review advancements in replacement products for items defined in this policy and plastic products not currently covered, with a goal of significant reduction in single use plastic footprint, Appendix 1. Procedure - *Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives*.

When evaluating the ability to eliminate single use plastics and single use products in general, the College's campus reduction program components are recommended to be prioritized as follows:

1. Implement operational and behavioral changes to **eliminate** the use of disposable products;
2. Select disposable products that do not contain plastic to **replace** single use plastic products;
3. Select disposable products that are BPI Certified compostable to **replace** single use plastics. BPI Certified compostable products are considered single use plastics until the campus has established a composting program and is ensuring BPI Certified compostable products are being composted and managed in accordance with manufacturer and composting facility instructions;
4. Assure single use plastics that may be **recycled** are being recycled at an appropriate Material Recovery Facility. Recycling these products may require additional recycling programs beyond those currently in place;

5. Where plastic products are unavoidable, those made from recycled plastic are to be given preference;
6. Where an alternative to single use plastics is not yet available, an appropriate Material Recovery Facility is not available, or replacement is not practical, **exceptions** to this policy may be available;
 - a. Accessibility needs allow for an exception to all parts of the policy;
 - b. Other exceptions to this policy will be extremely limited and are noted in College Requirements, in Appendix 1. Procedure - *Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives*. Exceptions should be reviewed at least annually for continued applicability;
 - c. Additional exceptions may be necessary to support emergency operations, such as public health emergencies or extreme supply chain disruptions. This exception should only be used in the short term, institutions must return to following Appendix 1. Procedure - *Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives* promptly when the emergency has ended; and
 - d. Where alternatives are not available and the purpose is for the health, safety, wellbeing of the College Community, or for bio, health, scientific, culinary, and any other College education delivery.

The term single use plastics encompasses a wide range of plastic materials, specific product types and typical usage for each product. Appendix 2. Definitions defines the types of plastic and identifies categories and the usage of products in each of those categories.

College and Affiliate Origination Vice Presidents, Department Heads, and Managers are responsible for their respective departments to be in compliance with this policy and will conduct department reviews as stated in this policy and submit them to the College Administration.

Appendix 1 – Procedure

This related Procedure identifies recommended timelines for the elimination of each category of single-use plastics at the College, with consideration for the:

- availability of affordable alternatives;
- the accessibility of alternatives to all students, faculty, and staff; and the
- effectiveness of reusable alternatives.

This Procedure also includes a graduated schedule for eliminating various products and a methodology for assessing progress. The College will strive to eliminate products generally recognized as being designed for single use, ahead of the designated schedule suggested by the State University of New York listed below, by prioritizing durable and reusable alternatives.

Process.

I. General

This procedure applies to SUNY Schenectady Community College, and its affiliated organizations, including but not limited to Auxiliary Services Corporations, and applies at the College and at any college-sponsored activity or college-affiliated activity.

As the College is committed to respecting and protecting the environment and rights of all persons as part of the environment, in terms of efficiency, sustainability, cost and security as it relates to single use plastics reduction, the College has instituted this policy to:

- Establish College-wide requirements and timelines for elimination of single use plastics;
- Eliminate the use of disposable products where practical and, where elimination is not practical, replace single use plastic products with BPI certified compostable products;
- Establish effective measurement and verification processes; and
- Continue to review advancements in replacement products for items defined in this policy and plastic products not currently covered, with a goal of significant system-wide reduction in single use plastic footprint.

In furtherance of this policy, the College has established specific requirements and timelines, identified in the following section, II Requirements.

II. Requirements.

The term single use plastics encompasses a wide range of plastic materials, specific product types and typical usage for each product. *Appendix 2 - Definitions* defines the types of plastic and identifies categories and the usage of products in each of those categories.

When evaluating ability to eliminate single use plastics and single use products in general, College reduction program components should be prioritized as follows:

1. Implement operational and behavioral changes to **eliminate** the use of disposable products wherever possible;

2. When disposable products are the only choice, **select** disposable products that do not contain plastic;
3. Select disposable products that are BPI Certified compostable to **replace** single use plastics. While BPI Certified compostable products are considered single use plastics until the College has established a composting program and is ensuring BPI Certified compostable products are being composted and managed in accordance with manufacturer and Composting Facility instructions, it is still preferred the College procure BPI certified disposable products to non-compostable products;
4. Where plastic products are unavoidable, those made from recycled plastic are to be given preference, with higher recycled content being preferred.
5. Assure single use plastics that may be **recycled** are being recycled at an appropriate Material Recovery Facility. Recycling these products may require additional recycling programs, and expanded education for the college community, beyond those currently in place;
6. Where an alternative to single use plastics is not yet available, appropriate end of life management facilities are not available, or replacement is not practical, **exceptions** to this policy may be available;
 - a. Accessibility needs allow for an exception to all parts of the policy;
 - b. Other exceptions to this policy will be extremely limited and are noted in the following tables. Exceptions should be reviewed at least annually for continued applicability; and
 - c. Additional exceptions may be necessary to support emergency operations, such as public health emergencies or extreme supply chain disruptions. This exception should only be used in the short term, institutions must return to following Procedure 5200 Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives promptly when the emergency has ended.

● Requirements

A. **Bags**, as defined in Appendix 2. Definitions, are to be eliminated from use by the College according to the following schedule:

ID	Usage	Elimination Goal (Note 1)	By Date and Related Notes
1	Grocery/takeout bags	100%	8/1/2024
2	Resealable, loose product, individual bags, i.e. Ziplock, plastic lined paper bags, and paper bags with cellophane windows.	25%	8/1/2024
		50%	8/1/2025
		100%	When possible, Note 2 , Emergency, Note 7
3	Trash bags for individual offices, & classrooms	50%	8/1/2025
		100%	When possible, Note 2 , Emergency, Note 7
	Exceptions		

4	Laboratory and medical instruments and products wrapped in plastic to maintain sanitary state	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3
5	Trash bags (waste/garbage can liners) for labs, restroom, kitchenettes, food service, hospitals, and centralized collection areas.	Temporarily Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3
6	Resealable bags, paper bags with windows, patient belonging bags, specimen bags, cadaver bags and other medical bags required for safe and sanitary healthcare services.	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3

B. **Balloons**, as defined in Appendix 2. Definitions, are to be eliminated from use by the College according to the following schedule:

ID	Usage	Elimination Goal (Note 1)	By Date and related Notes
1	Celebration , balloon releases	100%	Immediately
2	Celebration, other than balloon releases	50%	8/1/2024
		100%	8/1/2025
3	Signage or wayfinding	100%	8/1/2025
	Exceptions		
4	Balloons used for medical procedures	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3
5	Balloons used for scientific research procedures	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3
6	Balloons used for art installations and performances	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3

C. **Beverage Bottles**, as defined in Appendix 2. Definitions, are to be eliminated from use by the College according to the following schedule:

ID	Usage	Elimination Goal (Note 1)	By Date and related Notes
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1	Water bottles: Individual servings and up to 5 gallons per container (Retail, dining, catering, and office purchases)	100%	8/1/2027 When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Contract based, Note 4
1a	Water bottles: Individual servings and up to 5 gallons per container	100%	8/1/2025 Emergency, Note 7 Medical exemption, Note 8
2	Non-water beverage bottles (ex: soda, juice, dairy, tea, etc.): Individual servings and up to 3-liter containers (Retail, dining, catering, and office purchases)	100%	8/1/2027 When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Contract based, Note 4
2a	Non-water beverage bottles (ex: soda, juice, dairy, tea, etc.): Individual servings and up to 3-liter containers	100%	8/1/2025 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Contract based, Note 4 Emergency, Note 7 Medical exemption, Note 8
	Exceptions		
3	Bottled water during a water or medical emergency	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Emergency, Note 7 Note 3
4	Bottles needed to ensure accessibility	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3
5	Bottles other than water and non-water beverage bottles.	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3
6	Bottles used in patient care settings where such restriction might impair patient care (e.g., individual bottles of nutritional supplements, restricted diets, etc.).	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3

D. **Food Service Products**, as defined in Appendix 2. Definitions, are to be eliminated from use by the College according to the following schedule:

ID	Usage	Elimination Goal (Note 1)	By Date and related Notes
1		50%	8/1/2025

	Food Service containers in Dining areas	100%	8/1/2026 Contract based, Note 4
2	Cafes, snack bars, and grab-and go	100%	8/1/2027 When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Contract based, Note 4
3	Fast food restaurants and branded restaurant chains, including those at athletic facilities, theaters, and other College venues	100%	8/1/2027 When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Contract based, Note 4
	Exceptions		
4	Hospitals	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Contract based, Note 4

E. **Stirrers, Straws, and Spill Plugs/Sticks**, as defined in Appendix 2. Definitions, are to be eliminated from use by the College according to the following schedule:

ID	Usage	Elimination Goal (Note 1)	By Date and related Notes
1	Straws for dine-in and take-out drinks	100%	8/1/2024 Medical exemption, Note 8
2	Stirrers for dine-in and take out	100%	8/1/2024
3	Plastic spill plug/ splash stick for dine-in and take out	100%	8/1/2024
	Exceptions		
4	Plastic straws available upon request	Exempt	Takeaway service, Note 5
5	Hospitals/ Health Care straws, stirrers, and spill plugs/sticks when clinically indicated for patient care	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Contract based Note 4 Takeaway service, Note 5
6	Specialty straws (shakes, Boba tea, etc.)	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Takeaway service, Note 5

F. **Utensils**, as defined in Appendix 2. Definitions, are to be eliminated from use by the College according to the following schedule:

ID	Usage	Elimination Goal (Note 1)	By Date and related Notes
1	Dine-in	100%	8/1/2025 Medical exemption, Note 8
2	Take-out	100%	8/1/2027 When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Contract based, Note 4
	Exceptions		
3	Catering services, when reusable is not practical. When reusable is not practical, but composting facilities are available then BPI Certified is preferred.	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3
4	Hospitals	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Contract based Note 4

G. Wraps and Packaging Films, as defined in Appendix 2. Definitions, are to be eliminated from use by the College according to the following schedule:

ID	Usage	Elimination Goal (Note 1)	By Date and related Notes
1	Food preparation and storage (internally generated as the result of College food service operations - includes 3rd party vendor operations at the College)	100%	8/1/2027 When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3
2	Manufacturer product packaging such as plastic wrapping of individual items such as take-out utensils, paper towel rolls, books, scientific instruments, etc.	100%	8/1/2027 When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3
3	Industrial wrap generated internally to manage warehouse goods, shipping materials for outgoing packages.	25%	8/1/2025
		50%	8/1/2026
		75%	8/1/2027

		100%	When possible, Note 2
	Exceptions		
4	Food packaging films and wraps (received from vendors) - including but not limited to minimally processed raw ingredients, prepared foods and sauces, prepared dressings and condiments in single serve and bulk packaging, soft drink syrups for use in machines, etc.	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3 Contract based Note 4 Alternative review required Note 6
5	Pallet wrap and shipping materials received from vendors, and for outgoing shipments when wrap is necessary for safe containment of the items being moved.	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual review required, Note 3
6	Medical & Hygiene products which are sealed in plastic to maintain sanitary state	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual Review Required, Note 3
7	Plastic wraps, films and industrial wrap used for medical, scientific, and artistic products and/or purposes	Exempt	When possible, Note 2 Annual review required, Note 3

Note 1: Single use plastic products are considered eliminated when operational or behavioral changes eliminate a disposable product entirely or when the single use plastic product is replaced by a reusable product, by a disposable product that does not contain plastic in any form, or by a BPI Certified compostable product that is collected and processed in an appropriate composting facility.

Note 2: When alternatives exist that allow for elimination of single use plastics in this application, or a replacement product that does not contain plastic in any form or is BPI Certified and appropriate Material Recovery Facility is available. For Beverage Bottles, final dates to be determined when bottlers have viable, affordable alternative vessel for replacement, included in pouring rights contracts. For Food Service Products and Take Out Containers, when manufacturers and franchise brands have viable, affordable alternatives. For Wraps, when manufacturers have viable affordable alternatives which are NSF International approved (previously known as National Sanitation Foundation). All efforts where possible to reduce in the interim will be made.

Note 3: Exceptions and exemptions shall be reviewed at least annually for potential availability and affordability of operational changes to eliminate plastics, recyclability of current products, or availability of BPI certified substitute products and appropriate composting facilities. This is not intended to mean

every exempted product must be fully researched for all possible replacement products, but rather to mean the College annually reviews what product categories it considers to be exempted and to note any potential improvements based on knowledge of new products that have entered the marketplace

Note 4: Exceptions may be necessary based on contractual obligations. However, at such time as contract renewals or new contract solicitations take place, these requirements are to be built-into the new contract specifications.

Note 5: Compostable takeaway food service products, utensils, and straws are still considered single use plastic unless collected and properly composted.

Note 6: In cases where the use of single use plastics is required to support existing equipment (i.e., soft drink syrups in dispensing machines), exceptions and exemptions should be reviewed when associated equipment are due for replacement to identify alternatives that do not require single use plastics.

Note 7: Single-use plastic items may be used in cases of emergency, such as public health emergencies or extreme supply chain disruptions. This should only be used in the short term; institutions must return to following the procedure when the emergency is lifted.

Note 8: Exempt from restriction when used to support a student in need of medical sick-tray.

● **Measurement and Verification Process**

A. Establish College baseline – The College shall complete the following tasks to establish a baseline and track the amount of single use products being used in a typical year.

1. Review past use of single use plastic products. Review is to include items on the chart below and the amount purchased for each College affiliates, and auxiliary services for FY 2022-2023. For products where a baseline is not available for FY 2022-2023, the College is to establish baseline for FY 2023-2024.
2. The College and ASCs are to review and summarize existing College contracts which may impact timing of implementation, and where the College can provide appropriate justification to advise the Office for Capital Facilities an adjusted elimination schedule is necessary.
3. Document the current state of College recycling activities, on-site composting activities, and availability of offsite composting facilities. “Current state” includes diversion rates (recycling and composting), as well as trash, recycling and compost quantity by weight.

B. Establish a plan for reduction as set forth in this procedure.

1. Develop a College specific plan indicating the plans for plastic use reduction and improved recycling;
2. Procurement practices are to give preference to products which report the single use plastic content associated with the product, the recycled content and other information about the company’s plastic reduction policies. This includes not only the plastic used for the product packaging but also plastic used related to shipping such as plastic wrap.
3. Identify interim steps such as purchasing of BPI certified compostable products even if a process for composting these items is not yet in place.

4. Define a timeline for establishing a composting process, and whether it will be on-site or at a certified composting facility. Identify responsibility for transport to any such composting facility.

C. Collect data and complete required annual reporting.

1. Report the following information about single use plastics including BPI compostable products that are not being composted:

ID	Description of Single Use Plastic Items	Quantity Purchased
1	Plastic grocery/takeout bags	
2	Plastic resealable, loose product, individual bags, i.e. Ziplock, plastic lined paper bags, and paper bags with cellophane windows.	
3	Trash bags for offices	
4	Balloons	
5	Water bottles: Individual servings and up to 5 gallons per container	
6	Non-water beverage bottles (ex: soda, juice, dairy, tea, etc.): Individual servings and up to 3-liter containers	
7	Plastic cups	
8	Plastic lids	
9	Plates, bowls and other takeout containers	
10	Plastic straws	
11	Plastic stirrers/spill plugs	
12	Plastic utensils	
13	Wraps and packaging films	
14	Manufacturer product packaging such as plastic wrapping of individual items such as take-out utensils, paper towel rolls, books, scientific instruments, etc.	

2. The College will require vendors to provide either volume or weight data to the College for all waste and recycling material removed with each succeeding procurement of waste and recycling services.
3. Report amount of the items covered by this procedure that have been composted and whether composted at the College or at a certified facility.
4. The College will report on exceptions that are being granted and to include a brief justification for such exceptions.
5. The College will report on what progress is being made, and to refresh the future plans.
6. Changes to enrollment are recognized to have an impact on overall quantities of waste and recycling.
7. College and Affiliate Origination Vice Presidents, Department Directors and Managers are to submit the annual report to Administration when requested for each of their departments, but no later than June 30th of each year.
8. The [annual data reporting form](#) is located at the end of this procedure.

D. College awareness campaigns

1. The College will work with sustainability professionals and student groups to establish a communication campaign to inform the College community of the importance of reducing single use plastics and the steps being taken to achieve the reduction.
2. Install proper informational graphics to guide the College community to dispose of products in the correct containers.
3. Include information about the College plastics reduction efforts in all College orientations to develop a culture of being responsible community members.

E. Exception Request Form

1. Any request for an exception must be submitted to the College Administration by Vice Presidents, Directors and Managers for their respective departments.
2. The [Exception application request form](#) is located at the end of this procedure.

ANNUAL DATA REPORTING FORM

SUNY SCHENECTADY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives Policy, 4.13

Department or College Affiliate Organization Name: _____

Department Number (if applicable): _____

Vice President, Department Director or Manager submitting this form

This report is due from each department to the Administration each July 1st regardless of single use plastic usage, and is open to inspection by SUNY.

Report the following information about single use plastics including BPI compostable products that are not being composted:

ID	Description of Single Use Plastic Items	Quantity Purchased (Enter N/A where Applicable)
1	Plastic grocery/takeout bags	
2	Plastic resealable, loose product, individual bags, i.e. Ziplock, plastic lined paper bags, and paper bags with cellophane windows.	
3	Trash bags for offices	
4	Balloons	
5	Water bottles: Individual servings and up to 5 gallons per container	
6	Non-water beverage bottles (ex: soda, juice, dairy, tea, etc.): Individual servings and up to 3-liter containers	
7	Plastic cups	
8	Plastic lids	
9	Plates, bowls and other takeout containers	

SUNY Schenectady County Community College Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives Policy 4.13

10	Plastic straws	
11	Plastic stirrers/spill plugs	
12	Plastic utensils	
13	Wraps and packaging films	
14	Manufacturer product packaging such as plastic wrapping of individual items such as take-out utensils, paper towel rolls, books, scientific instruments, etc.	

Applicant acknowledgement

I agree with the below statement

I hereby acknowledge by my agreement above that this reporting form is accurate and that myself and any department that may report to me will continue to abide by SUNY Schenectady County Community College’s Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives Policy, 4.13.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

EXCEPTION APPLICATION REQUEST

SUNY SCHENECTADY COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives Policy, 4.13

This request is due from each department to the Administration for each exception applied for, then due July 1st of every year to extend the exception, and is open to inspection by SUNY.

Department or College Affiliate Organization Name: _____

Department Number (if applicable): _____

Vice President, Department Director or Manager requesting Exception

Exception requested (Please choose one):

- Undue Hardship or Practical Difficulty (includes excess inventory) not generally applicable to other persons in similar circumstances (up to one year, applies to entire Policy).
- Public Health and Safety Requirement or Medical Necessity to use the product (up to one year, applies to entire Policy).
- Accessibility Needs
- To support emergency operations (short-term)
- For Bio, Health, Scientific, Culinary, and other College education delivery.

Which of the Policy does this application for an Undue Hardship or Practical Difficulty apply to?
Please choose all that apply (and submit facts to support):

- Providing single-use plastic carryout bags
- Providing disposable food service ware made of single-use plastic
- Providing disposable food service ware that is non-recyclable or non-compostable
- Selling or renting single-use plastic

Please describe in detail the basis of the request, include and explain factual support for the claimed exception (may use a separate piece of paper):

Requests without facts and/or that show lack of effort WILL NOT be approved.

Please attach documents that show factual documentation to support this request.

How long is the request for this exception? _____
Exceptions are limited to one year or less.

Applicant acknowledgement

I agree with the below statement

I hereby acknowledge by my agreement above that this application is accurate. I understand that additional information or clarification may be requested during the review process prior to approval, and will submit appropriate documentation and allow inspections as requested by the College Administration. I understand this request needs to be verified by the College Administration prior to receiving approval of this application (in whole or in part, with or without conditions), and until an approval is received myself and any department that may report to me will continue to abide by SUNY Schenectady County Community College's Elimination of Single Use Plastics and Preference for Durable and Reusable Alternatives Policy, 4.13.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2 – Definitions

I. Definitions

A. Material Definitions:

1. **Plastic** is “a lightweight, hygienic and resistant material which can be moulded in a variety of ways and utilized in a wide range of applications.”ⁱ Most plastics are not capable of undergoing biological decomposition in a compost facility but will photodegrade and create microplastics.ⁱⁱ
 - a) **Biobased materials or bioplastics** are those that are produced from renewable raw materials. Biobased materials are not necessarily biodegradable or compostable.ⁱⁱⁱ Often, biobased materials are made from fiber crops such as hemp and flax, bamboo, sugarcane, etc.
 - b) **Biodegradable plastics** are plastic materials that will decompose through biological processes, resulting in harmless bi-products. They may be made from renewable raw materials but may also be made using crude oil or natural gas.^{iv}
 - c) **Fossil fuel-based plastics** are the most commonly used. These items are often comprised of polyethylene terephthalate (PET), high-density polyethylene (HDPE), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), low-density polyethylene (LDPE), polypropylene (PP), polystyrene (PS), expanded polystyrene foam (EPS) poly(methyl methacrylate) (PMMA), non-BPI certified polylactic acid (PLA), and paper or paperboard lined with wax or any of the listed plastics.

2. **Photodegrade** – this process occurs when plastics break down into smaller and smaller pieces due to UV irradiation, eventually becoming microplastics, which release harmful chemicals into the environment.^v

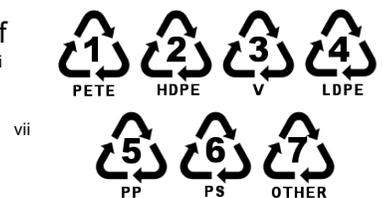
3. **Resin Identification Code (RIC)** is the common identification system for consumers and recyclers to identify the resin content of plastic containers commonly found in the recycling waste stream.^{vi}

RIC: 1 Polyethylene terephthalate,
RIC: 2 high-density polyethylene,
RIC: 4 low-density or linear low-density polyethylene,
RIC: 5 polypropylene,
RIC: 6 polystyrene, and

RIC: 7 other plastics (polycarbonate, non-BPI certified polylactic acid)^{viii ix x}

RIC: 3 Polyvinyl Chloride or PVC *has special recycling challenges and is not included in most recycling programs.*

4. **BPI Certification** is a certification by the Biodegradable Product Institute that indicates that a product meets ASTM standards for compostable products. The BPI Certification Mark indicates that an item is compostable and can be diverted to a commercial composting facility with food scraps, where programs exist.
5. **Recycling** is “the process of collecting and processing materials that would otherwise be thrown away as trash and turning them into new products.”^{xi}
6. **Recyclable** is able to be recycled. Although many products may be marketed as recyclable, the ability to recycle a product depends upon the availability of a recycling system for that product in combination with a secondary market for the recycled materials. Recycle Right New



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Figure 1 Green Living Tips
What the numbers Mean
2009

York (<https://recyclerightny.org/>) provides information on what can and cannot be recycled in each municipality.

7. **Composting** is “the natural process of recycling organic matter, such as leaves and food scraps, into a valuable fertilizer that can enrich soil and plants” .^{xii}
8. **Compostable in Industrial Facility** items are designed to be composted under aerobic conditions in municipal and industrial aerobic composting facilities, where thermophilic conditions are achieved.
9. **Compostable plastic** is plastic that meets the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) D6400 standards.
10. **Wax-lined products** are paper and paperboard products that have been lined with wax, commonly paraffin wax, a petroleum derivative, to improve moisture resistance. Wax lining prevents these products from being recyclable or compostable.
11. **Plastic-lined Products** are paper and paperboard products that have been lined with a thin film of plastic to improve moisture resistance. The plastic lining prevents these products from being recyclable or compostable.

B. Product Definitions:

1. **Single use plastic** products are those designed or likely to be used by a consumer only once before being discarded. Single use plastic products may be made from fossil fuel-based plastics or biobased materials (bioplastics) or a combination of both. They may be recyclable or compostable. Single use plastic products include, but are not limited to, the following products:
 2. Bags
 - a) **Definition:** An unwoven poly fabricated receptacle for storing, carrying, packing a variety of items and materials, primarily made from a variety of plastic polymers, with polyethylene and polypropylene being the most common.^{xiii} They are not designed for reuse, but are meant to be disposed of directly after use. Though they are very thin and easy to carry, plastic bags are strong, waterproof, and hold their shape under normal use. Single use plastic bags are often not recyclable in municipal recycling programs because they are too thin and lightweight. They are not biodegradable but will photodegrade.
 - b) **Usage:** Used and provided throughout campus sites in a variety of areas including dining services, environmental services, and retail shops.
 - c) **Applications:** Include, but are not limited to grocery bags, takeout bags, resealable bags (i.e. Ziploc bags), other types of shopping bags, “cellophane” bags, produce bags, and plastic wrapping on utensil sets. Plastic-lined paper bags (shiny, wax coating) and paper bags with plastic windows, which are commonly used for bakery and other food items and included because the plastic components prevent them from being compostable or recyclable.
 3. Balloons
 - a) **Definition** Balloons are flexible bags made of materials including but not limited to rubber, latex, polychloroprene, metalized plastic, mylar, and nylon fabric. Non-plastic balloons are included because they act like plastic in the environment.^{xiv}
 - b) **Usage:** Most commonly used for decorative purposes at campus events and celebrations.
 - c) **Special Considerations:** Although compostable balloons are available, they are used with plastic or plasticized ribbons or ties that generate plastic waste and contaminate composting facilities. Therefore, compostable balloons are not an acceptable alternative

to traditional balloons.

4. Beverage Bottles

a) **Definition:** rigid or semi rigid containers designed to contain liquids and/or solids, feature caps and/or lids. They are not designed for reuse and may instead be designed for recycling, regardless of whether cost effective local recycling is available and possible.

b) **Usage:** Sold, served or distributed throughout campus in a variety of areas and activities, including dining areas, events, vending, concessions, and retail shops for beverage distribution.

c) **Applications:** Single use plastic bottles are used for individual servings and bulk delivery of beverages including water tea, juice, and soda, may be used as part of routine or emergency operations.

d) **Special considerations:** Single use plastic beverage bottles are not only purchased by campuses or related entities in support of campus activities but may also arrive on campus from individual purchase at off campus locations, and brought onto campus for events or personal consumption. Beverage bottles may also be part of office pantries or centrally funded amenities.

5. Food service products

a) **Definition:** Hot cups, cold cups, lids, portion cups, take-out containers, bowls, trays/boats, and plates that are designed or likely to be used once prior to disposal. This includes products used for immediate or on-site consumption and delayed or off-site consumption. These may be fossil fuel-based or are wax-lined or plastic-lined paper and paperboard.

b) **Usage:** Most commonly used by institution-run and on-campus third party food services, dining halls, coffee shops, snack bars, and at campus events. May be used for take-away or grab and go service from dining halls, cafes, marketplace.

c) **Special considerations:** They are also used when space and labor are limited, to avoid the washing of reusable dishes.

6. Stirrers, straws, and spill plugs / splash stick

a) **Definition:** Single use straws, stirrers and spill plugs includes compostable and biodegradable petroleum and biologically based polymer straws, stirrers and spill plugs, which are not designed for reuse.

- “Plastic straw” means a plastic tube for transferring a beverage from its container to the mouth of the drinker by suction.
- “Plastic stirrer” means a plastic device that is used to mix beverages. “Plastic stirrer” includes compostable and biodegradable petroleum and biologically based polymer stirrers but does not include stirrers that are made from non-plastic materials.
- “Plastic spill plug/splash stick” means a device that is used to prevent liquid and heat from escaping a lidded cup. Often this acts as a stirrer as well.

b) **Usage:** Commonly utilized throughout campus and associated with beverage consumption, often in food courts, some dining halls, offices, box lunches and catered events. Single use plastic straws, stirrers and spill plugs are all items prevalent in coffee sales. Plastic stir sticks are often packaged with sugar, creamer and a napkin, and sealed in plastic at “grab and go” coffee stations to ensure sanitation.

c) **Special considerations:** These items in particular are difficult to effectively recycle

based upon their size.

7. Utensils

- a) **Definition:** Forks, knives, spoons, sporks, serving spoons, serving forks and serving tongs designed or likely to be disposed of after one use.
- b) **Usage:** Traditionally utilized throughout campus to consume or serve food. Typically provided in food courts, some dining halls and on-campus restaurants, offices, box lunches and catered events.
- c) **Special considerations:** These products are often made of black plastic. Black plastic is difficult to recycle because the sensors used for automatic sorting in material recycling facilities are not able to detect it.^{xv}

8. Wraps and packaging films

a) **Definition:** A general term used to describe many different materials that are used to secure or hold items within a container or while transporting multiple containers at the same time.

- Plastic wrap most often refers to **industrial plastic wrap** for securing pallets or **food grade plastic wrap** for sealing and securing food items in containers to keep fresh. Food plastic wrap is also known as cling film, cling wrap, food wrap, and saran wrap^{xvi}.
- Plastic film is a soft, flexible polyethylene most often used in packaging materials. Film may be used in applications such as bag in box beverages, bagged bulk condiments, individual condiment packages, bagged sauces, meat and fish packaging, and bags inside boxes to protect products (i.e. baked goods or paper towel wrap).^{xvii} Plastic films are also used to make inflatable packaging (i.e. bubble wrap and air packs for cushioning items), as shrink and skin packaging films for containing products, and are applied to other materials.

b) **Usage:** Food grade plastic wrap, shrink, and skin film packaging is most commonly used on campus in institution-run and on-campus 3rd party food services, dining halls, coffee shops, snack bars, and at campus events for food preparation, service and storage. Food grade plastic wrap, shrink, and skin film packaging is also used by vendors to package raw or minimally processed ingredients, bulk and individual servings of prepared sauces, foods, and dressings, soft drink syrups, and other food and drink products for delivery to campuses.

- Industrial wrap is commonly used by campuses to package materials for transport on and off campus and by vendors to package materials for transportation, as pallet wrap or as cushioning inside packages.
- Plastic wraps and films may be used for medical and scientific practices or purposes.

c) **Special considerations:** Plastic wrap and film packaging is often used in the food supply chain to extend shelf lives and minimize food waste, so efforts to eliminate these plastics must be balanced with efforts to minimize food waste. Plastic wraps and films are often marketed as “recyclable”. However, these products are not often recyclable in single-stream recycling programs, as they require special accommodations, and may not be recyclable if contaminated by food or other materials.

C. Processing Definitions

1. Composting Facility:

An area where organic matter may be delivered and will be processed properly to encourage safe decomposition resulting in a material suitable to be used for enhancing soils for improved plant growth. Composting may be done on the campus proper or may be a governmental or commercial facility off-campus.

2. Material Recovery Facility:

A governmental or commercial facility that collects, handles, separates and prepares recyclable materials to be sold for reuse by manufacturers.

3. Anaerobic Digester:

Specialized equipment and management of such to break down organic waste in an oxygen free environment, into usable organic materials and bio-gas for heating and other purposes.

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