PET 101:

Everything you need to know about the world's #1 plastic.

Not all plastics are the same. PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles and containers are safe, light weight, resealable and shatter-resistant. Best of all, they are designed to be fully recyclable. Americans collect over 1.6 billion pounds of PET every year, helping to make it the world's most widely recovered plastic.

History

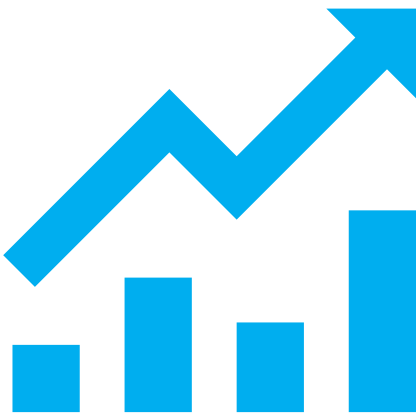
PET rose from humble beginnings to its current most-valued status, due in large part to its performance characteristics and the fact that it is 100% recyclable.

- PET plastic (polyethylene terephthalate) was first polymerized in the 1940s by DuPont chemists seeking an ideal material for textile fibers.
- In 1973, the first PET bottle was patented.
- In 1977, the first PET bottle was recycled.

Economics

Though PET is primarily used in small-bottle applications, it's had a huge impact on the world economy. In North America, in particular:

- PET generates jobs for more than 265,000 workers in the U.S. and Canada.
- Recycling 200,000 more PET bottles per day could add up to $800 million to the U.S. economy.
- More than 2 billion pounds of used PET bottles and containers are collected annually in the U.S. and Canada to be recycled.
- PET's exceptional strength-to-weight ratio permits more product to be delivered with less packaging, requiring less fuel to transport.
- PET bottles keep getting lighter, weighing nearly 40 percent less than they did in the year 2000.
- 70% of carbonated soft drinks, fruit juices, dilutable drinks and bottled water are packaged in PET bottles.



Environment

PET is inert, does not leach into the earth and is 100% recyclable, so it has virtually no direct impact on the environment.

- PET is recyclable, over and over, serving the world in many forms, again and again.
- Its material recycling value makes PET less likely to end up in landfills.
- PET is light weight lowering shipping costs, reducing the amount of fuel burned as well as emissions generated.
- Because used PET can be recycled into new products, less virgin PET has to be produced, further reducing greenhouse gas generation.
- PET is the only plastic with the designation 1. When you see the 1 inside the triangle on your bottle or container, you'll know it's PET, and should be recycled.

Performance

PET plastics provide high performance relative to other materials, especially in packaging and protecting food and beverages.

- PET packaging and bottles showcase products with crystal clarity and luster.
- PET demonstrates excellent resistance to moisture, micro-organisms and degradation.
- PET bottles and containers are more durable and versatile than aluminum—and unlike glass, they're shatter-resistant.
- PET is nontoxic and FDA approved for contact with food and beverages.
- PET does not contain and has never contained bisphenol A (BPA).

Get Involved

At NAPCOR, we're always working to protect the environment. Here are some things you can do to help the world's #1 plastic get recycled even more.

- Rinse PET bottles and containers thoroughly before placing them in a recycling bin.
- Lids and caps are often not made of PET, but can be recycled with the bottle if left on.
- Do not put PET plastics in regular trash, or they won't be recycled.
- Spread the good word about PET plastics among family, friends and community.
- Submit an article about PET recycling to your local newspaper.
- Start your own PET recycling club.
- Write to your state or U.S. congressional representative about the benefits of PET.
- Offer to speak about PET recycling at your local school.

Learn more about the positive economic and environmental benefits of PET plastics at PositivelyPET.org.

NAPCOR
National Association for PET Container Resources