

## How to Start a Plastic Recycling Depot

**Goal:** To retrieve as much recyclable plastic from the waste stream as possible -- beyond what is collected by civic recycling programs (LOTS).

### How:

- \* Visit the Pacific Mobil Depots (PMD) website, and ideally an actual depot, to learn about the eight categories of plastics/styrofoam that can be recycled.
- \* Get participation from at least 10-12 households, and ask for people's emails, promising to use them for only the depot. Participation means people will collect recyclable plastics over a month or two. You need 10-12 households to reach the 6 bag/\$30 minimum for PMD to do the pick up.
- \* Set a time and a place to gather just prior to the third Saturday of the month. (PMD picks up from neighbourhood depots (Or workplaces!!) on the Friday before the third Saturday of the month, with some variations over Xmas.) I have done it from 7:00-8:00pm on the Wednesday before the Saturday. Having a small window (one hour) means that many people are there at the same time, which makes it more fun.
- \* Arrange a pick-up spot accessible to PMD, and confirm with PMD that



you want them to do a pick up this month.

- \* Secure 5-10 very large see-through plastic bags -- I think they are 60" x 36". These are for the recyclable plastics. (After your first pick up, PMD will supply replacement bags.)
- \* Send a reminder at the beginning of the month as to the date for this month's depot. I put the time and date in the subject line. (I also put a note to myself in my calendar to send the two reminders each month.)
- \* Send a second reminder a few days before the depot. In the beginning, remind people that the plastics need to be clean and dry. Also remind people that there is as \$2-6 cost, depending on the volume of plastics they have.
- \* Run the depot:
  - Have a different plastic bag for each category:
    1. Hard -- any and all hard plastics. Includes CDs
    2. Soft -- Not cellophane. Very compressible.

3. Foil and foil lined packaging
4. Styrofoam containers
5. Styrofoam blocks
6. Styrofoam "peanuts"
7. Tetra paks
8. Milk and other cardboard containers -- cups, ice cream containers
9. QUESTIONS -- have a bag or a box for questions

For more details, see PMD website.

- \* Collect \$2-6 or more from each person. It can be helpful to have a pad of paper for tracking who paid what, and therefore being able to make sure you are collecting enough to cover expenses.
- \* At the end of the depot, tie off the bags (no twist ties, as twist ties include metal).
- \* On the day of the pick up, put the plastics out for collection. Confer with PMD to arrange payment. The pickup costs are \$5/huge bag. If you have several smaller bags, guess how much they total in "big bag units". Remember to ask for replacement bags -- either in person, or in a note.
- \* **Have Fun!**
- \* Check the PMD website from time to time for updates.
- \* *Optional:* Cultivate a convening team, so that more than one person can run the depot. Ideally 1-2 instigators anchor the depot until it is well established.

### Things to watch for:

- ◆ Keep tetra paks (VII) separate from (VIII) cardboard milk, juice and other cardboard containers.
- ◆ Keep the three styrofoam categories separate.
- ◆ Everything needs to be clean and dry!
- ◆ Paper -- e.g. in CD covers -- please remove
- ◆ If someone brings tons of CDs, they should be kept separate, versus being added to the hard plastics bag.
- ◆ Please don't accept mesh bags that can't be ripped -- they have metal in the plastic filaments
- ◆ Metal -- e.g. metal screws in kids toys, or pens, or in videos.
- ◆ Plastic rims on the lids of some ice cream containers. These need to be separated from the cardboard, and sorted into categories I and VIII.

