

Make 2021 Your Year to Break Free from Plastic Pollution

by Karen Jacobsen, Conservation Commission

Dear Falmouth Residents:

We have become accustomed to using plastic in many forms in our day-to-day life as they are convenient and often feel unavoidable. But there are things we can do to limit our use and make a difference for our environment. Before you buy products or throw out plastic waste, please consider the following:

- Plastics contribute to both climate change and environmental destruction
- Plastic trash and microplastics are harmful to fish, birds, other wildlife, and humans
- Plastics are made from a byproduct of fracked natural gas and petroleum products releasing great amounts of CO₂ and methane into the atmosphere
- A 2019 report from the World Wide Fund for Nature found that adults ingest an average of 5 grams (the weight of a credit card) of microplastics each week
- Less than 10% of plastics are recycled; over 90% is thrown into landfills or incinerated destined for our waterways and atmosphere.

Please do your part by recycling hard plastics and plastic film responsibly

- The Town of Falmouth contracts with ecomaine to recycle hard plastics. You can place hard plastics in your curbside recycle bin.
 - The hard plastic must be marked with a number (1-7).
 - The plastic must be hard or rigid.
- Plastic bags can be recycled *in drop-off bins or at customer service desks* at Hannaford's, Shaw's, or Walmart in Falmouth or Kohl's, Home Depot, Lowe's, and Target in the Portland area. Some stores, including Hannaford, accept plastic film for recycling. Store recycling policies vary and it is important to be mindful of each stores' unique policies regarding recycling bags and plastic film. Placing the incorrect item in their bins can contaminate the other recyclables and should be avoided. For more information contact plasticfilmrecycling.org.
 - Clean or washed air pillows, grocery and retail plastic bags, case wrapping, newspaper bags, bread bags, fresh produce bags, food storage (Ziploc) bags, and the plastic packaging around napkins, paper towels, bathroom tissue and diapers

are all recyclable in these drop-off bins. Remember, check your preferred store's policies.

- Any bag or wrap with the "How2Recycle" label can also be added to the drop-off bin.
- In general, plastic film that can be stretched when you pull it with your fingers is recyclable. Recyclable film may have the #2HDPE or #4LDPE label
- Frozen food or pre-washed salad bags CANNOT be recycled because they contain additives that contaminate the other recyclables.
- If the plastic crinkles, tears, or is stiff like pet food bags it is NOT recyclable.

Thank you for doing your part to care for the earth by reducing plastic pollution.