



POLYSTYRENE BAN

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q1. What is a polystyrene product?

A polystyrene product is any product that is manufactured from the resin of polystyrene, a thermoplastic polymer that softens when heated and can be converted into semi-finished products such as films and sheets. General purpose polystyrene is clear, hard and brittle.

The most common polystyrene also commonly known as Styrofoam products in Fiji are takeaway containers, cups, plates and trays.

Q2. Why is polystyrene bad?

Like plastics, polystyrene is very harmful to the environment and has indirect negative impacts on human health. Polystyrene takes almost 500 years to decompose in the natural environment and also contains toxic substances such as Styrene and Benzene and some carcinogens and neurotoxins that are harmful to humans. Hot foods and liquids actually start a partial breakdown of the Styrofoam, causing some toxins to be absorbed into our bloodstream and body tissue. Polystyrene food containers leach the toxin Styrene when they come into contact with warm food or drink, alcohol, oils and acidic foods causing human contamination and pose a health risk to humans.

Polystyrene is a threat to the environment because of its lightweight nature, floatability, and likelihood to be blown from disposal sites even when properly disposed. The lightweight and buoyancy of polystyrene enables it to travel easily through gutters and drains, eventually reaching the ocean. When polystyrene travels down waterways and drains into the ocean, it breaks down into smaller, non-biodegradable pieces that are ingested by marine life and other wildlife thus harming or killing them. This eventually filters into the food web thus leading to the ingestion of toxic material into our bodies (known as bio-accumulation).

Q3. Why is it important to ban polystyrene in Fiji?

Polystyrene products are found almost everywhere in Fiji. Whether it is seen as environment litter or used as food packaging material in the food industries. The problem of polystyrene litter is most evident during festivals such as the Hibiscus festival or the smaller carnivals that are held around the country. During these times, polystyrene litter particularly in the form of polystyrene takeaway

containers are seen floating around the venue areas eventually making its way to our waterways and harbours. The unpleasant look is only exacerbated by the environmental threat polystyrene poses.

Fiji and other Pacific island countries are custodians of the largest ocean in the world. The ban is our response to preserve ocean health which is in a serious decline due to marine pollution, rising sea temperature and climate change.

Q4. Which polystyrene products will be banned from 1 Jan 2021?

The Fijian Government will ban polystyrene products that fall in the following category:

- Polystyrene food containers/takeaway packs,
- Polystyrene cups;
- Plates; and
- Polystyrene meat/vegetable packaging trays.



This ban does not apply to polystyrene products that are of any other use, such as:

a) Cooler boxes;



b) Foam mattresses and sponges;



c) Cushioning materials in packaging.



Q5. When will the polystyrene ban come into effect and where will it apply?

- 1 January, 2021 – Import/export of polystyrene containers, cups, plates, and trays
- 1 August 2021 – Manufacture, sale, supply and distribution of polystyrene containers, cups, plates, and trays

Polystyrene products will no longer be used at:

- Supermarkets;
- Restaurants, food courts and outlets;
- Municipal and roadside markets; and
- All commercial outlets

Q7. What are the penalties for not complying with the ban?

- A person who manufactures a banned polystyrene product commits an offence and is liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding \$500,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 7 years or both.
- A person who –
 - a) Sells, supplies or distributes a banned polystyrene product to another person; or
 - b) Makes a banned polystyrene product available to a customer for packaging food purchased, or to be purchased, from a food industry, commits an offence and is liable upon conviction to a fine not exceeding \$150,000 or to a term of imprisonment not exceeding 2 years or both.

Compliance inspectors will regularly monitor businesses and take appropriate action including charging the offending businesses/individuals.

Q9. What can I use instead of polystyrene packaging?

Reusable Plastic containers



Bagasse made products



Bamboo made products



Molded Fiber products



Cardboard made products



Aluminum made products



Paper/PLA paper made products



Q10. How can I obtain more information on the polystyrene ban?

For more information on the polystyrene ban, contact the Ministry of Economy via e-mail at cleanocean@economy.gov.fj or Mobile: 8986312

To report those who violate the plastic ban law, contact the Department of Environment via e-mail: info6@govnet.gov.fj or the Department of Environment hotline number: 1520

Helpful Tips

- Keep reusable containers in your car, at work, or carry them in your bag
- After using your reusable containers, wash them and keep them in a place where it is easier to see and reach
- If you forget to do any of the above either borrow or buy a new reusable container, as it can be used again

Join us to help keep Fiji Polystyrene free!