

# Frequently Asked Questions

## City of Mill Valley Environmentally Preferable Food Packaging Ordinance

Effective November 2, 2009



### What does the Ordinance Require?

1. All retail food vendors, restaurants, and City facilities can no longer provide prepared or take-out food in, on or with disposable food packaging that contains Styrofoam.
2. Biodegradable food packaging is required when using disposable food packaging, which includes cold cups, plates, hinge containers, bowls, trays, cartons, cups, cutlery, straws, lids, and bags.

### What's Wrong with Styrofoam?

- Styrene, a compound in Styrofoam, is a known hazardous substance and a suspected carcinogen. It leaches from containers into the food or liquid it contains, and is detectable in the tissue of every man, woman and child in the U.S.
- In California, 165,000 tons of Styrofoam are used for food packaging annually.
- Styrofoam "can have serious impacts on human health, wildlife, the environment, and the economy," according to EPA.
- Styrofoam does not bio-degrade and there is no meaningful recycling of Styrofoam.
- The polystyrene manufacturing process is the 5th largest creator of hazardous waste, and ranks second in energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

### Which Containers are Allowed?

- Durable Ware: The best choice for the environment is re-use, so consider washable food service whenever possible.
- Uncoated Paper and Coated Paper (if coating is BPI certified).
- Cardboard.
- Bio-plastics and compostables, certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI). See reverse side for sources.

### What are the Penalties for Non-Compliance?

- The first violation is \$100, 2nd violation is \$200, and \$500 for each additional violation.



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**DO THE  
ALTERNATIVES  
COST MORE?**

Once Styrofoam packaging is completely removed from consideration, which this ordinance stipulates, in many cases, the environmentally preferable alternatives are the same cost as the conventional products, and in some cases, they cost less. For alternatives that are more expensive, a small "take-out" fee can cover the cost of eco-friendly containers.

Exemptions can be made if the environmentally friendly alternative costs 15% or more than the conventional choice (although Styrofoam is always prohibited).

Contact Carol Misseldine at the number listed to the right if you wish to be considered for an exemption.

## Sources for Environmentally Preferable Alternatives

We encourage individuals and organizations needing small quantities of these materials for private events to look for these products in local stores. Many carry environmentally preferable options. Retailers and others who need large quantities of these materials are encouraged to ask their current sales representative if they carry acceptable containers -- many do! If not, ask them to begin carrying them. Below are some of the many sources of environmentally preferable disposable food packaging.

Company	Website	Products
Excellent Packaging	<a href="http://www.excellentpackaging.com">www.excellentpackaging.com</a>	Bowls, plates, cups, soup containers, utensils
Sysco San Francisco	<a href="http://www.syscosf.com">www.syscosf.com</a>	Bowls, plates, cups, soup containers, utensils, clamshells, straws
World Centric	<a href="http://www.worldcentric.org">www.worldcentric.org</a>	Bowls, plates, cups, , clamshells, utensils
Green Earth Office Supply	<a href="http://www.greenearthofficesupply.com">www.greenearthofficesupply.com</a>	Bowls, plates, cups, soup containers, utensils, straws, trash bags, stir sticks
Greentooth	<a href="http://www.green-tooth.com">www.green-tooth.com</a>	Cups, bowls, plates, trays, pan liners, bag, utensils
Mr. Take Out Bags	<a href="http://www.mrtakeoutbags.com">www.mrtakeoutbags.com</a>	Bags, plates, cups, cutlery, lids
Let's Go Green	<a href="http://www.letsogogreen.biz">www.letsogogreen.biz</a>	Cups, soup containers
Food Service Warehouse	<a href="http://www.foodservicewarehouse.com">www.foodservicewarehouse.com</a>	Cups, bowls, plates, cutlery, napkins, straws
Aardvark Paper Straws	<a href="http://www.aardvarkstraws.com">www.aardvarkstraws.com</a>	Straws, stir sticks

Companies listed are for reference only. The City of Mill Valley does not endorse any specific business. A complete listing of products certified by Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) can be found at [www.bpiworld.org/BPI-Public/Approved.html](http://www.bpiworld.org/BPI-Public/Approved.html).



**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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