

Town of Los Gatos



PROPOSED FOAM FOOD CONTAINER ORDINANCE

What businesses would be affected?

- Cafeterias
- Caterers and fraternal clubs
- Convenience, liquor, & grocery stores
- Mobile food vendors, carts, food kiosks and stands
- Restaurants, coffee shops, bars and pubs
- Retail stores
- Restaurant supply
- Party supply
- Drug stores
- Hardware stores
- Supermarket take out

Proposed Ordinance Elements

- Consideration by Town Council in Fall 2014
- Proposed Ordinance Implementation in 2015, if adopted by Town Council
- Ordinance would require restaurants to eliminate the use of expanded polystyrene (EPS), commonly known as Styrofoam™ food ware.
- Polystyrene foam containers include cups, bowls, plates, trays, cartons, and hinged or lidded containers (clamshells); and polystyrene foam ice chests or coolers, unless wholly encased within a more durable material (e.g. metal with foam core).
- Food providers may choose alternative paper, plastic, or reusable containers that best meet their needs.
- The proposed ordinance would provide financial hardship and unique packaging exemptions

Resources

The following documents can be found at www.LosGatosCA.gov/EPS

- Informational Fact Sheet
- EPS Alternative Product Pricing List

What is Polystyrene Foam and Why is the Town Considering a Ban?

Expanded polystyrene foam (EPS) is a form of plastic that has been identified as a distinctive litter concern because it crumbles easily into small pieces, is lightweight, and easily windblown into streets and waterways that flow into the Bay and eventually the ocean. It is difficult to collect by street sweepers and creek clean up volunteers. The particles are mistaken as food by birds, fish and wildlife, causing reduced food consumption and impaired intestinal tracts. Urban runoff pollutants attach to the particles and, if ingested by wildlife, can cause reproductive failure, disease or death. The ban is expected to result in less foam litter, and result in improved water quality as required by the new Municipal Stormwater Permit.

