



City of Westfield, Massachusetts

Board of Health

59 Court St, Westfield, MA 01085
Phone: (413) 572-6210 Fax: (413) 572-6279



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

Westfield Health Department

Regulation of the Westfield Board of Health Restricting the use of Polystyrene Disposable Food Containers in Food Establishments

A. Statement of Purpose:

Whereas, styrene is a synthetic compound often used to make rubber, plastic, insulation, fiberglass, pipes, automobile parts, carpet backing and disposable food containers.¹

Whereas, published in the National Toxicology Program's 12th Report on Carcinogens (2011), styrene, a key ingredient in polystyrene and expanded polystyrene is reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen.²

Whereas, styrene exposure can occur through smoking, inhalation of indoor air, and ingestion of food.²

Whereas, styrene seeps out of polystyrene containers and into warm food and drink, causing a recommendation against microwaving polystyrene food containers.³

Whereas, in a study concerning the migration of styrene in polystyrene cups to hot drinks, it was determined that the concentration of styrene monomer found in the drinks was above the Environmental Protection Agency recommended levels, including the Maximum Contaminant Level Goal (MCLG) standard.⁶

Whereas, the amount of styrene monomer migration from polystyrene into hot drinks was dependent on the temperature and fat content of the drinks.⁶

Whereas, exposure to styrene vapor can cause irritations of the eyes, nose, throat, and skin, as well as toxic effects on the liver, and can act as a depressant on the central nervous system that also causes neurological impairment.⁶

Whereas, potential effects of styrene exposure during its production can cause eye and mucosal irritations and gastrointestinal issues. Possible effects on the central nervous system include headache, weakness, fatigue, depression, general dysfunction hearing loss and peripheral neuropathy.⁴

Whereas, workers with high exposure to styrene showed increased cancer of the lymph hematopoietic system and possibly related mortality, as well as increased levels of DNA adducts and genetic damage to lymphocytes.²

Whereas, occupational studies concerning styrene have shown risks for workers for lymph hematopoietic cancers, such as leukemia and lymphoma, and genetic damage in the white blood cells, or lymphocytes, as well as increased risks for pancreatic and esophageal cancers.²

Whereas styrene has caused lung tumors in mice.²

Whereas, benzene a component of polystyrene is a known carcinogen and enters the body through the respiratory system and skin contact.³

City of Westfield, Massachusetts

Board of Health

Whereas, polystyrene is a harm to the environment. It makes up a considerable amount of debris in cities, and is harmful to the marine wildlife that it often arrives in.³

Whereas, the environmental impacts of polystyrene rank second behind aluminum for total environmental impacts especially in energy consumption and greenhouse gas effects.³

Whereas, over 80% of plastic pollution to the ocean comes from urban litter such as polystyrene.⁵

Whereas, less than 35% of fast food restaurants' waste does not end up in landfills.⁵

Whereas, polystyrene is not biodegradable and does not easily deteriorate in landfills, taking up more space than paper.³

Whereas, programs to recycle polystyrene are expensive, costing thousands of dollars per ton and litter clean-up costs billions.⁵

Whereas, polystyrene is not recycled because it is not economic to wash, degrease, transport, and store in order to recycle.³

Whereas, over 100 American, Canadian, European and Asian cities and towns have enacted a polystyrene ban.³

Therefore it is the intention of the Westfield Board of Health to prohibit the purchase, sale, distribution and use of any polystyrene disposable food container used to serve prepared food in a food establishment.

B. Authority:

This regulation is promulgated to the authority granted to the Westfield Board of Health by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 111, Section 31 that "Boards of Health may make reasonable health regulations".

C. Definitions:

For the purpose of this regulation, the following words shall have the following meanings:

Disposable Food Container: Single use disposable containers used for the purpose of serving and transporting prepared and ready-to-consume food or beverages. This includes but is not limited to plates, cups, bowls, trays, and hinged or lidded containers. This does not include single-use packaging for unprepared food, nor single-use items such as disposable straws, cup lids, or utensils.

Expanded Polystyrene (EPS): Polystyrene that has been expanded or "blown" using a gaseous blowing agent into a solid form.

City of Westfield, Massachusetts

Board of Health

Food Establishment: An operation that stores, prepares, packages, serves, vends or otherwise provides food for human consumption, as further defined in 105 CMR 590.002. Any establishment requiring a permit to operate in accordance with the State Food Code, 105 CMR 590.000, et. seq., shall be considered a food establishment for purposes of this Board of Health regulation.

Polystyrene: Can also be referred to as "Styrofoam", a trademarked brand owned by the Dow Chemical Company. A type of expanded polystyrene, a thermoplastic petrochemical material utilizing a styrene monomer and processed by any number of techniques including, but not limited to, fusion of polymer spheres (expandable bead polystyrene), injection molding, form molding, and extrusion-blow molding (extruded foam polystyrene). Polystyrene also refers to clear or solid polystyrene, also known as "oriented polystyrene".

Prepared Food: Food and beverage prepared on the food provider's premises for consumption using any food preparation or cooking technique. This does not include unprepared food such as uncooked raw meat, fish or eggs unless provided for consumption without further food preparation.

Styrene: A colorless, flammable liquid, characterized with a sweet odor and high volatility. This industrial chemical is used to make polystyrene.

D. Prohibition:

No food establishment shall use disposable food containers made from polystyrene or expanded polystyrene to provide prepared food to customers. No person shall purchase, offer for purchase, sell, give away, or distribute any polystyrene disposable food container from a food establishment.

E. Violations:

It shall be the responsibility of the establishment, food establishment permit holder and/or his or her business agent to ensure compliance with this regulation pertaining to the prohibition of his or her distribution of polystyrene disposable food containers in their establishment. The violator shall receive:

- a. In the case of the first violation, a fine of one hundred dollars (\$100.00).
- b. In the case of a second violation within 36 months of the date of the current violation, a fine of two hundred dollars (\$200.00) and the food establishment permit shall be suspended for seven (7) consecutive business days.
- c. In the case of three or more violations within a 36 month period, a fine of three hundred dollars (\$300.00) and the food establishment permit shall be suspended for thirty (30) consecutive business days.

City of Westfield, Massachusetts

Board of Health

F. Non-Criminal Disposition:

Whoever violates any provision of this regulation may be penalized by the non-criminal method of disposition as provided in Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 21D or by filing a criminal complaint at the appropriate venue.

Each day any violation exists shall be deemed to be a separate offense.

G. Enforcement:

Enforcement of this regulation shall be by the Westfield Board of Health or its designated agent(s)

Any person who desires to register a complaint pursuant to the regulation may do so by contacting the Westfield Board of Health or its designated agent(s) and the Board shall investigate.

H. Severability:

If any provision of this regulation is declared invalid or unenforceable, the other provisions shall not be affected thereby but shall continue in full force and effect.

I. Effective Date:

This regulation shall take effect on: September 1, 2016

Date of Board of Health Vote: January 13, 2016

Board of Health Members: Juanita Carnes, FNP- BC Chairperson
Michael Paquette, Pharm.D. Member
Teresa Mitchell, M.D. Member

Director of Public Health: Joseph Rouse

¹ Agency for Toxic Substances & Disease Registry, (2011), *Toxic Substances Portal* (Styrene). Retrieved from: <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/substances/toxsubstance.asp?toxid=74>.

² National Toxicology Program, (NTP) (2011), *12th Report on Carcinogens (RoC)* (Substance Profile (Styrene)). Retrieved from: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21822324>.

³ The Way To Go, (2008), *Polystyrene Fact Sheets*. Retrieved from: <http://www.priateliazeme.sk/spz/files/PolystyreneFactSheets.PDF>.

⁴ Environmental Protection Agency, (EPA) (2000), *Styrene*. Retrieved from: <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/styrene.pdf>.

⁵ Californians Against Waste, (2014), *The Problem of Polystyrene*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cawrecycles.org/polystyrene-and-other-non-recyclable-plastics>.

⁶ Khaksar, M.-R., & Ghazi-Khansari, M. (2009). Determination of migration monomer styrene from GPPS (general purpose polystyrene) and HIPS (high impact polystyrene) cups to hot drinks. *Toxicology Mechanisms and Methods*, 19(3), 257–261. Retrieved from: <http://doi.org/10.1080/15376510802510299>