

SERVING THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Life Cycle of PET Trays

PET is a type of plastic that is most used in products that come into contact with food, namely PET bottles and PET trays.

Polyethylene terephthalate

HOW ARE PET TRAYS RECYCLED?

1. COLLECTION

Trays are collected with other household waste before being separated at a sorting centre, after which they are compressed into bales.

Although made from the same plastic, PET trays and bottles must be recycled separately due to the specific properties of these materials.

2. SORTING

When they arrive at a recycling plant, the bales are sorted and the quality of the plastic material is checked.

3. GRINDING

Trays are ground and cut into flakes.

When trays are ground into flakes, smaller particles – called fines – are produced.

4. WASHING

Flakes and fines are washed separately, while simultaneously running through multiple cycles, in order to ensure high quality and safety for food contact applications.

5. DENSITY SEPARATION

PET flakes are separated from other floating plastics in a float-sink tank that helps sort different types of plastic according to their density: while PET sinks, labels made from PP or PE float.

6. EXTRUSION

Flakes are melted and filtered in a process that removes any residues that may have survived previous stages.

Did you know that 40% of all PET bottles and trays in the EU are made of recycled plastics?