



Our Goal: Reduce single-use plastics in Milwaukee and surrounding communities.

Plastic-Free MKE is not a single non-profit organization, but a **movement**. Our movement is collaborative of dedicated community volunteers, non-profit organizations, government agencies, and businesses. Together we make up the Plastic-Free MKE Coalition.

Plastic-Free MKE is addressing plastics because they impact:

- **Our health**- Plastics contaminate our air, food, and water. Each week the average American ingests a credit card's worth of plastic.
- **Our lakes, rivers, and oceans** - 85% of fish from the Milwaukee River contain plastic in their digestive tract. 22 million pounds of plastic enter the Great Lakes each year, half of which is in Lake Michigan.
- **Our planet as a whole** - Plastics are made of fossil fuels and contribute 300 million tons of carbon dioxide to climate change each year.

Plastic-Free MKE Initiatives

Public Awareness, Activism, & Advocacy: Includes public webinars and meetings, presenting for other organizations, tabling and leading activities at community events, and educating the public via our social media channels and newsletter.

Plastics Education Toolkit: The toolkit, created by Plastic-Free MKE volunteers and partners, provides a menu of resources which educators are invited to adapt based on their unique student and classroom needs.

H2O Refill Program: This program supports Milwaukee's movement for social justice by donating reusable water bottles and by providing water refill stations at local marches, rallies, and other events.

Lake Friendly Program: This program supports and gives recognition to restaurants, bars, and cafes that are removing as much plastic as possible from their daily operations.

Want to learn more? Visit our website at plasticfreemke.org

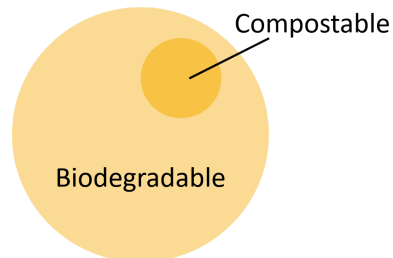
Frequently Asked Questions:

Why can't we just ban plastics?

In 2015, Governor Scott Walker enacted a preemptive ban on the regulation of “auxiliary containers,” often referred to as the Ban on Bans. The law prevents the City of Milwaukee (or any Wisconsin city or county) from banning, taxing, or enacting a fee on any single-use item. Private commercial businesses can still choose to charge customers for a bag or decide to go plastic-free, but they cannot be forced to do so by a government entity.

What does “biodegradable” mean?

Biodegradable substances can be decomposed into naturally-occurring materials (such as CO₂, water, and biomass) by bacteria or other living microorganisms without leaving toxic residues. However, there is little national regulation over the use of this term and not everything labeled as “biodegradable” actually is. Additionally, some items will only biodegrade over thousands of years or in particular circumstances (proper sunlight and water, specific bacteria, etc.).



What does “compostable” mean?

Compostable substances will biodegrade within a relatively short period of time (typically around 90 days) while releasing valuable nutrients into the soil. Commonly made out of PLA (Polylactic acid), bagasse (sugarcane fiber), or vegetable starch.

What conventional plastics can be recycled in Milwaukee?

Only plastic numbers 1, 2, & 5 can be recycled in Milwaukee. All others will be sent to the landfill, contaminate recyclable materials, or damage the recycling center sorting equipment.

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