

# The Gainesville Zero Waste News

## Expanded Polystyrene Containers (Foam Containers) Ban on City Property

On June 6, 2022, the City Commission approved new Zero Waste Ordinances for the City of Gainesville. Among these ordinances passed is the new **Expanded Polystyrene Containers Ban on City Property**. Expanded polystyrene (commonly known as Styrofoam®) containers include any plate, bowl, cup, container, lid, tray, cooler, ice chest, or similar item made of blown polystyrene and expanded and extruded foam material.

Effective September 2, 2022, this ordinance prohibits the distribution of prepackaged food or beverages in expanded polystyrene by a permit holder on City of Gainesville property or on the City of Gainesville right-of-way. This ban includes all vendors (including city-owned and/or operated services) at city parks, golf courses, and buildings, as well as permitted events on city streets (e.g., fairs & festivals). City agencies are encouraged to begin modifying their operations and find alternative containers for use to comply with this ordinance. For example, foam cups and trays can easily be replaced with eco-friendly food packaging products made of pulp fibers, sugarcane, or other biodegradable materials.

**The city's goal is to minimize the use of these items by replacing them with reusable, recyclable, or compostable alternatives on city property and prevent foam products from entering and harming our environment.** Expanded polystyrene is not biodegradable, meaning it does not naturally degrade over time and often breaks down into smaller pieces that pollute the land and waters, which pose threats to wildlife and make cleanup efforts more difficult.

Exceptions to this ordinance include (1) Foam items brought onto city property by individual visitors or employees from off-site sources; (2) the distribution of any prepackaged food that is filled and sealed in an expanded polystyrene container before receipt by the vendor (person or entity); and (3) raw meat or seafood that is stored in an expanded polystyrene container and sold from a refrigerated display or storage case.

For additional information on this ordinance, visit [gainesvillefl.gov/ZeroWaste](https://gainesvillefl.gov/ZeroWaste).

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