

# FOAM FREE *Virginia*

*Expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam isn't the best choice for people or the environment. It's time to learn about and plan for alternatives.*



**GET READY** In 2021, the Virginia General Assembly passed legislation that bans the use of EPS containers by food vendors. Currently, this ban will take effect in two phases. In the first phase, food establishments with 20 or more locations must stop using EPS containers by July 1, 2025. By July 1, 2026, remaining food establishments must comply with the ban. This applies to any food vendors that serve prepared food, including restaurants, cafeterias, food trucks, catering companies, and grocery store salad bars.

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## WHAT'S WRONG WITH EPS FOAM?

- It takes at least 500 years to break down & less than 1% is recycled.
- It can blow out of trashcans & enter the environment as litter.
- Wildlife mistake it for food & can't digest it.
- It is made from styrene, a possible carcinogen. Chronic exposure to high levels of styrene can cause liver & nerve tissue damage.

## WHAT ARE THE ALTERNATIVES?

- Reusable Containers
- Recycled Paper
- Bamboo
- Wheat Straw
- Foil & Metal
- Recyclable Plastic



**The law:** [www.law.lis.virginia.gov](http://www.law.lis.virginia.gov) & search "polystyrene food"  
**Visit:** [www.deq.virginia.gov/eps](http://www.deq.virginia.gov/eps)  
**Contact DEQ:** [valandr@deq.virginia.gov](mailto:valandr@deq.virginia.gov)  
(804) 659-2663

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