



Let's say no to polystyrene

Description

While on the surface polystyrene may have some redeeming qualities, the devastation it wreaks on the health of humans, animals and our natural environment is shocking. We're doing something about it.

Polystyrene causes environmental havoc. We, as an organisation, are finding solutions to limit its negative environmental and health implications by providing a once-off water bottle to all full-time office-based employees and contractors.

Polystyrene – hero or zero?



We see it every day, often blown around overflowing bins. It keeps our water hot or cold, transports our food from the canteen to the table or our home, and even protects human organs, all around the world. What a hero!

Yet polystyrene is a plastic, and when it's littered or leaks out of supply chains it can harm wildlife and last for hundreds of years before biodegrading.

Made from chemicals that come from oil and gas, styrene, one of the main ingredients of polystyrene, is a suspected health hazard. Research has shown that styrene mimics estrogens in the body, disrupting normal hormone functions, possibly contributing to thyroid problems and other hormone-related problems, as well as breast cancer and prostate cancer.

The production of polystyrene is the fifth largest industrial contributor to hazardous waste and one of the most common causes of global pollution. Because it is so lightweight and breaks apart easily into smaller pieces, it tends to drift away on currents of wind and water. When eaten by animals such as

fish, birds and turtles that mistake the particles for food, it often leads to death from malnutrition. It poses a widespread threat to the health of wild animals and the ecosystems that depend on them.

What are we doing?

AfroCentric is finding solutions to limit the negative environmental and health implications of polystyrene by providing a once-off water bottle to all full-time office-based employees and contractors.

How will it work?

- The distribution of the once-off water bottles will be rolled out one building at a time, starting with Princeton.
- Facilities will announce in the weekly newsletter which building is next in line to receive the water bottles and contribute to the protection of the environment.
- Once your building has been issued with water bottles, polystyrene cups will be removed and discontinued.

What if...

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- **I don't want to use the supplied water bottle?**

Employees are welcome to bring their own water bottle or glass to the office for drinking water. We encourage employees to extend this to a coffee mug and a container or plate with utensils for when you purchase food from the canteen. This will help reduce our carbon footprint on the environment.

- **We receive visitors?**

It remains each department's responsibility to ensure they have a set of cups or glasses available for their guests.

- **New employees join our team?**

During the onboarding process for new employees, where we explain business procedures such as parking and access tags, we should also remind them to bring a water bottle.

- **I occasionally come into the office and/or travel?**

To ensure you remain well hydrated, it's recommended to have a water bottle in your laptop bag.

AfroCentric – making a difference, one polystyrene cup at a time.

Category

1. Our Lifestyle

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