



HEALTH DISTRICT Environmental Health Updates

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.

DEQ

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 & search "polystyrene food"
Visit: www.deq.virginia.gov/eps
Contact DEQ: valandr@deq.virginia.gov
(804) 659-2663

VDH Permitted Food Establishment Updates

Hello all permitted food facilities. This message is to inform you about new legislation that may cause some confusion regarding its implications for your operations.

Please be advised that the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is not the regulating agency for this new legislation. The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is responsible for its oversight and enforcement.

If you have questions or require further clarification regarding this Bill, please direct your inquiries to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality. Their contact information is provided below:

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Email: VA-landr@deq.virginia.gov

🔥 When's the last time you checked your fire extinguisher?

Yes—they expire! Most fire extinguishers last 5 to 15 years, but that doesn't mean they're always ready to go.

- ✓ Check the pressure gauge
- ✓ Look for a manufacture or expiration date
- ✓ Replace if damaged, expired, or not fully charged

A quick check could save a life. 🧯



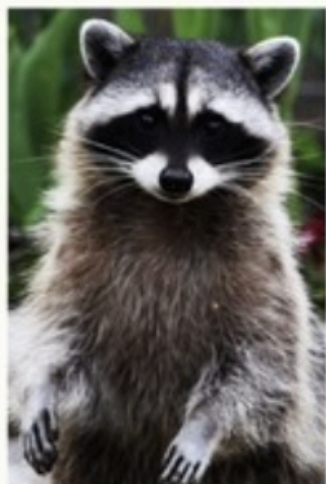
Keeping food facilities fire safe

To ensure the safety of your staff and customers, and to comply with Virginia's Statewide Fire Prevention Code (VSFPC), all food facilities, including mobile food units, are required to have appropriate fire extinguishers readily available.

For any commercial cooking equipment that produces grease-laden vapors (e.g., deep fryers), a Class K portable fire extinguisher is specifically mandated. Additionally, a minimum 2A:10BC rated fire extinguisher is also generally required for all mobile food vendor operations. These extinguishers must be maintained and inspected annually by a certified fire protection company, with records kept on file.

Let's protect both wildlife and ourselves by giving nature the space it needs. 🌿💚

Don't Touch Wildlife!



Wild animals may look cute or in need of help, but touching them can be dangerous for you and them.

As summer brings more outdoor activity, it's crucial to remember that wildlife, especially animals like raccoons, skunks, foxes, bats, and groundhogs, can carry rabies.

This serious viral disease affects the nervous system and is almost always fatal once symptoms appear. *To protect yourself and your pets, avoid approaching or touching any wild animals, even if they seem friendly or appear to be acting strangely (e.g., lethargic, disoriented, or unusually aggressive).* If you encounter an animal exhibiting unusual behavior, or if you or your pet are bitten or scratched by a wild animal, contact your local animal control or health department immediately.

RRHD local health department contact information: RRHD.org









Cool down safely!

Splash pads offer a fantastic way for kids to cool off and have fun in the summer, but it's important to keep safety in mind.

- Always supervise children closely, as even in shallow water, accidents can happen.
- Remind kids not to run on the wet surfaces to prevent slips and falls.
- Discourage kids from drinking the splash pad water, as it's not treated for consumption and can spread germs.
- Regular bathroom breaks are essential, and if your child isn't potty-trained, swim diapers should be used and checked frequently.
- Finally, don't forget sun protection – apply sunscreen regularly, and consider hats and rash guards to shield them from the sun's rays.

Learn more about splash pad safety at:

<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/environmental-health/environmental-health-services/swim-healthy/splash-pad-safety/>

DO		DON'T	
	DO stay out of the water if you are sick with diarrhea.		DON'T swallow the water.
	DO shower before getting in the water.		DON'T poop or pee in the water.
	DO take kids on bathroom breaks or check diapers every hour.		DON'T sit or stand on the jets. Sitting or standing on jets can rinse poop off your butt.



As summer continues in Virginia, it's important to remember that ticks are highly active and prevalent throughout the state.

These tiny arachnids can transmit various diseases, including Lyme disease (most commonly spread by the Blacklegged or "deer" tick), Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (American Dog tick), and Ehrlichiosis (Lone Star tick), as well as the emerging Alpha-gal Syndrome, which can cause a red meat allergy.

Ticks are found in wooded, bushy, and grassy areas, even in suburban settings. To protect yourself and your family, perform thorough tick checks after spending time outdoors, especially in areas like armpits, groin, hairline, and behind knees.

If you find a tick, remove it carefully with tweezers and contact your healthcare provider if you develop any symptoms like a rash or fever in the following days or weeks.