There are about 50 different groups of plastics, with hundreds of different varieties. All types of plastic are recyclable.

To make sorting and thus recycling easier, the American Society of Plastics Industry developed a standard marking code to help consumers identify and sort the main types of plastic.

These types and their most common uses are:

1. **PET** - Polyethylene terephthalate - Fizzy drink bottles and oven-ready meal trays, peanut butter jars

2. **HDPE** - High-density polyethylene - Bottles for milk and washing-up liquids, motor oil

3. **PVC** - Polyvinyl chloride - Food trays, fast food service items and shampoo, cooking oil bottles

4. **LDPE** - Low density polyethylene - Grocery bags and can liners.

5. **PP** - Polypropylene - Margarine tubs, microwaveable meal trays, bottle caps, yogurt containers, straws

6. **PS** - Polystyrene - foam meat or fish trays, hamburger boxes and egg cartons, vending cups, plastic cutlery, protective packaging for electronic goods and toys (packing peanuts).

7. **OTHER** - Any other plastics that do not fall into any of the above categories. - An example is melamine, which is often used in plastic plates and cups.