

Dartmouth Manufacturer Begins Foam Plastic Recycling Program

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DARTMOUTH, NS – Truefoam Limited is pleased to announce the launch of the next phase of an Expanded Polystyrene (EPS) recycling program in their Dartmouth plant.

Truefoam recently acquired an EPS (commonly known as “styrofoam”) densification machine. The RUNI SK370 is a heavy duty, versatile machine that is capable of compacting a large variety of materials. This equipment reduces the volume of expanded polystyrene by a factor of 40:1, and can process approximately 400 lbs of material per hour. The end result of the compaction process is a dense block of EPS that is then recycled.

Recent Life Cycle Analyses have shown that expanded polystyrene has far less overall impact on the environment than other competitive materials, such as paper and cardboard, for the same use. These analyses take into account all stages of a product's life. In each of these stages the quantity of energy it consumes is ascertained as well as the quantity and type of atmospheric and water pollution it causes and the quantity of solid waste it generates. This relatively new discipline is the most efficient method available for evaluating the overall environmental impact of materials, and is widely accepted by environmental agencies, universities and government authorities.

Packaging Studied	Environmental Load Index	
	EPS	Corrugated Cardboard
EPS = 1	EPS	Corrugated Cardboard
Energy Consumption	1	2.3 – 3.8
Air Pollution	1	3.1 – 4.1
Water Pollution	1	2.3 – 2.8
Weight	1	6.4
Global Warming Potential	1	4.0 – 4.4

Kunststoff, Berlin 2, University of Victoria 3

For EPS manufacturers like Truefoam, extolling the environmental and performance virtues of their products in an increasingly knowledgeable marketplace is not as tough a sell as it once was. The question remains however; how do you deal with EPS at the end of its initial use?

Expanded Polystyrene is 100% recyclable. The issue has always been one of cost versus benefit for municipal waste management authorities. It is often considered to be uneconomical for municipalities to commit resources to transfer a material comprised of 98% air to recycling facilities. As a result, most of the municipalities that offer EPS recycling programs in North America do so because of local public demand, and in many cases these programs are assisted by the support of a corporate partner.

When Truefoam was considering the purchase of an EPS densification machine, they measured several factors. From a manufacturing standpoint, this equipment will assist in reducing the overall volume of their production waste. By purchasing a machine with a recycling capacity beyond their own requirements, the people at Truefoam began to envision the potential of working with waste management officials to possibly divert large volumes of foam products from local landfills.

As the largest manufacturer of EPS products in Atlantic Canada, Truefoam has long been committed to reducing its environmental footprint and over the years they have implemented many green practices into their manufacturing facilities. The idea of working with local government officials and becoming one of the first municipalities in Canada to offer an EPS recycling program was very exciting for the people at Truefoam.

Truefoam's planned recycling program has been met with a great deal of enthusiasm by NS Department of Environment and members of the Resource Recovery Fund Board (RRFB). Truefoam has invested in the recycling equipment, facility and labour 100%, and have approached local waste management authorities regarding the transportation of waste EPS to their facility. Bob Kenney, Recycling Development Office with the NS Department of Environment and Brennan Gillis, Business Development Officer with RRFB have been working with Truefoam to achieve their goal of EPS waste diversion from local landfills.

Representatives from the Department of Environment and Truefoam have had meetings with officials at HRM's Solid Waste Resource Management, and although an agreement has not yet been put in place with HRM, Truefoam remains interested in the potential of EPS recycling in Halifax. The purchase of a densification machine that far exceeds their requirements leaves the door open for an EPS recycling program in HRM's future.

Currently, Truefoam is recycling in-house EPS waste at their plant in Burnside far more efficiently than in the past, and have had preliminary discussions with local businesses that have expressed an interest in recycling their EPS waste. They invite anyone interested in learning more about the life cycle of EPS and the recycling process to contact them.

1 "Styrofoam" is a trademark of The Dow Chemical Company

2 Life Cycle Analyses Report performed by University of Victoria professor of chemistry Martin B. Hocking

3 InFo Kunststoff - "EPS and corrugated cardboard, a life cycle study".