

ICC Network Speed Survey Results April 2023: Expanded Polystyrene “Foam”

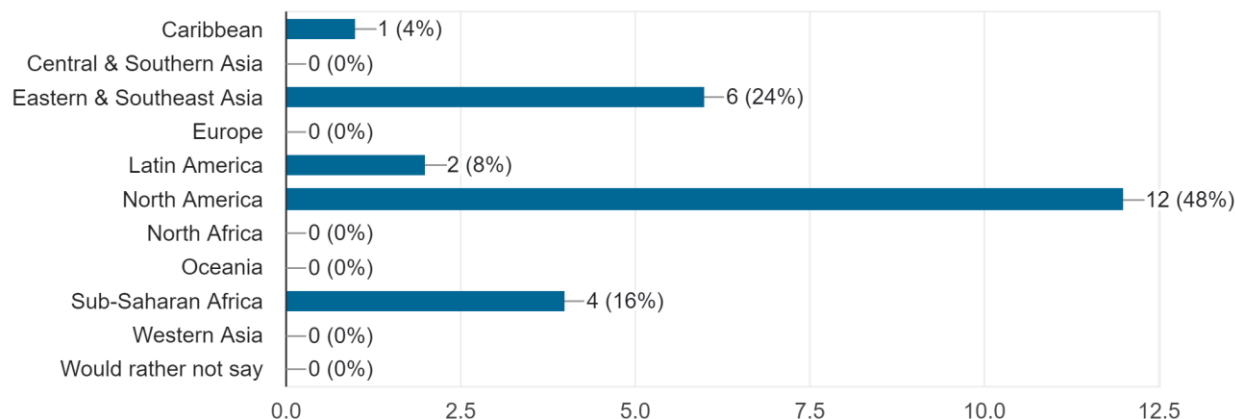


Responses: 25

General Demographics:

1.) In what region(s) of the world does your organization conduct waterway or coastal cleanups?

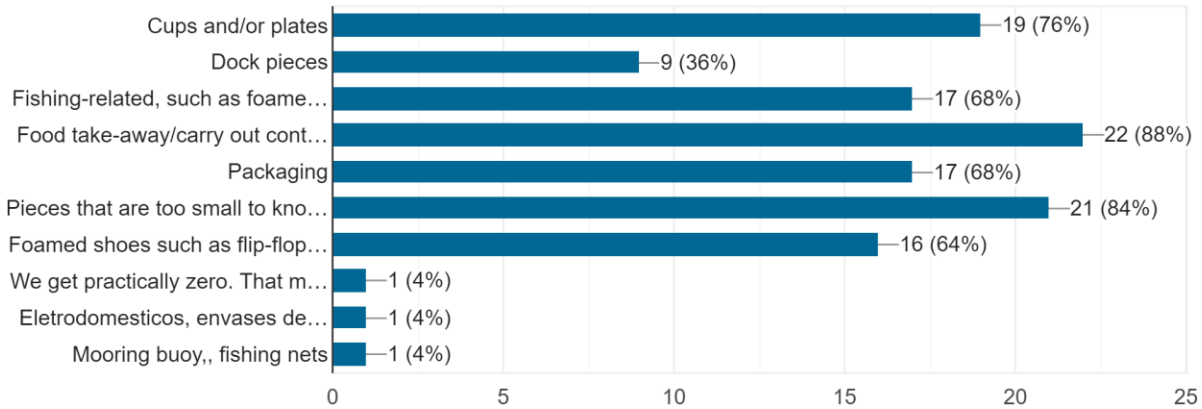
Region Index Source: UNEP SDG Indicator Regions ...unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/regional-groups/
25 responses



Countries/locations represented: Brazil, Ghana, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Kenya, Malaysia, Mexico, Nigeria, Saint Lucia, Taiwan, Philippines & United States (Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina)

2.) What are the types of EPS/foam trash items commonly collected at cleanups in your area?
Check all that apply.

25 responses



[Note: The other categories are essentially “None or very little foam”, “household appliances & oil containers” and one more response for fishing-related foam.]

- Top three most common from this group: Microplastic “tiny trash”, take-away food containers, cups/plates –i.e. food ware

3.) Of the same list of items, please indicate the EPS/foam trash item that you find MOST OFTEN at your cleanups.

24 responses



[Note: The full item description that have been cut off in #2 & #3 are: “Fishing-related such as foamed buoys or fish boxes”, “Food take-away/carry out containers or “clam shells”, “Pieces that are too small to know what the item once was” and “Foamed shoes such as flip-flops/slippers”]

4.) Are there any restrictions on EPS/foam where you work or hold cleanups? If so, please let us know more about these rules, policies, etc. and which EPS/foam items they target.

- North Carolina, USA: "Topsail Island and Wrightsville Beach passed an ordinance preventing future construction on unencapsulated Polystyrene Floating Docks" [Note: See latest ICC Report, page 4]
- Taiwan: "The EPS buoys are mainly oyster-farming related. For those buoys, different counties have different restrictions, such as totally prohibited in 2023 Chia-yi County."
- Florida, USA: "Miami Beach doesn't allow polystyrene to be sold anywhere in the city nor brought on to the beaches. Some of the city of Miami and Dade County parks are also supposed to be foam free but not sure how much it's enforced. Special events on these properties are not supposed to be selling in foam to-go ware, for example."
- Saint Lucia: "It [foam] has been banned currently, none can be imported. What is seen is either coming from other islands or what was on island before the ban."
- 12 responses were "No" or "I don't know of any."

5.) If you had an answer to the question above, have you seen any change in the amount of EPS/foam items collected during your cleanups after the restriction was put in place? These answers can be anecdotal or reflected in cleanup data.

- Overwhelming response: "None/not yet"

6.) Are there any EPS/foam recycling programs in your area? If yes, please provide a quick description and which item(s) they target.

- Overwhelming response: "None/not yet"
- North Carolina, USA: One recycling depot in a college town accepts large pieces of clean, dry foam
- Taiwan: "In the oyster-farming area, they tried to introduce a recycling program. The concept is all equipment can be fitted in a container which is moveable and dissolve the EPS buoys in chemical solvent to reduce the volume, the EPS will precipitate and form a black substrate in the bottom of the solvent. In the end of the process, they can just separate the solvent and the precipitation, the precipitation of EPS can reuse to make other degraded plastic products."
- Florida, USA: One grocery store chain has a drop box for certain foam products at the entrance of some of their stores. Products such as Styrofoam egg cartons, meat trays and cups.

7.) Do you have any comments or stories you would like to share related to EPS/foam prevention or cleanups?

- Georgia, USA: "We pick up a sizable amount of EPS every beach clean....most disturbing and nearly impossible to clean up are the thousands of tiny balls that break away from a broken boogie boards. Heartbreaking to see."
- Indonesia: "We need to provide local fishermen with the light fish boxes, local rules, and non EPS/foam mooring buoys"
- Kenya: "Yes, most of them are always spotted in mangroves here in Kenya and people don't consider them as trash"
- Florida, USA: "I remember doing a cleanup and we thought the shoreline had tons of rocks, we got closer and it was all foam. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x4Y7lO-miCl>"
- Florida, USA: "I know at least one coral growing organization that utilizes foam buoys to hold up the coral trees in the nursery looked into switching to plastic, since the foam degrades quicker and critters get into it, but financially it was just too much [cost] for the volume they need."
- Hong Kong: "The locals call it "Hong Kong snow " - there's areas where it's several feet deep."
- USA: "The locals seem to be fairly aware- it's the summer visitors that bring foam not sold locally and leave it on the beach. We used to go educate during and pick up after holidays and I thought it made a difference."