



# Long lasting litter – timeline

Timeline showing the estimated length of time it would take for different items of waste to break down in the sea.

Common waste found in the sea	Estimated length of time for waste item to break down
Paper towel	2-4 wks
Newspaper	6 wks
Cardboard box	2 months
Apple core	2 months
Waxed carton	3 months
Cotton shirt	6 months
Plywood	1-3 yrs
Cigarette butt	1-5 yrs
Wool socks	1-5 yrs
Plastic bag	10-20 yrs
Tin can	50 yrs
Styrofoam cup	50 yrs
Aluminium can	200 yrs
Plastic can holder	400 yrs
Nappy	450 yrs
Plastic bottle	450 yrs
Fishing line	600 yrs
Glass bottle	1 million yrs

**Sources:**

<http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/czm/coastsweep/pocket-guide-2003.pdf>

<http://www.tangaroablue.org/resources/fact-sheets.html>

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