

PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION BYLAW (PLASTIC BAG BAN)

FAQ'S

Why a bylaw banning plastic shopping bags?

- Plastic check-out bags have a significant impact on marine and terrestrial environments. Plastic bags:
 - Harm marine and terrestrial animals through ingestion and entanglement
 - Pollute and degrade the terrestrial and marine environments
 - Clog storm drain systems
 - Create a burden for solid waste disposal and recycling facilities
 - Pollute our watersheds and harm the natural beauty of our town.
- The new bylaw is intended to reduce litter and to ensure that most shopping bags distributed in town can be recycled.

What businesses are affected by this bylaw?

- Retail establishments are affected by this bylaw and are defined as any business facility that sells goods directly to the consumer whether for or not for profit, including, but not limited to: retail stores, restaurants, pharmacies, convenience and grocery stores, liquor stores, seasonal and temporary businesses.

What is meant by a thin-film, single use plastic check-out bag?

- Bags that are less than 4 mils thick, constructed of high-density polyethylene (HDPE), low density polyethylene (DPE), linear low density polyethylene (LLDPE), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), polyethylene terephthalate (PET), or polypropylene (other than woven and non-woven polypropylene fabric, and typically with handles.

What is meant by a “check-out” bag?

- A check-out bag is defined as a bag provided by a store to a customer at the point of sale. No thin-film plastic check-out bags may be distributed by retailers in Sharon.

What is meant by a “reusable check-out” bag?

- A reusable check out bag is a sewn bag with stitched handles that is specifically designed for multiple reuse and that:
 - Can carry 25 pounds over a distance of 300 feet
 - Can be washed/disinfected; and
 - Is made of either natural fiber such as cotton; or durable, non-toxic plastic (generally considered food grade) and is more than 4 mils thick.

PLASTIC WASTE REDUCTION BYLAW (PLASTIC BAG BAN) FAQ'S (Continued)

What type of paper bags are allowed?

- Paper bags allowed are as follows:
 - Must be 100 percent recyclable (e.g. non-recyclable string or ribbon handles, no heavily inked surfaces, no glossy coating); and
 - Must have at least 40 percent post-consumer recycled content; and
 - Must be labeled in a way to show the above conditions are met.

What plastic bags are exempted under the plastic bag ban?

- This ban does not include bags used for produce or meats, bulk foods, wet items, newspapers, dry cleaning, and other similar merchandise.
- Retailers which offer exempted plastic bags must now provide for the collection and property disposal of plastic bags as outline in the bylaw.

When does the plastic bag ban bylaw take effect?

- For Retail Establishments with greater than 3,500 square feet the bylaw will take effect **January 22, 2020**
- For Retail Establishments with less than 3,500 square feet, the ban will take effect on **July 22, 2020**.
- We strongly encourage all local business to begin implementation before the deadline to ensure any question which may arise can be addressed.

Will a fee be charged for reusable bags?

- This bylaw allows for free paper bags.

How will this bylaw be enforced?

- Enforcement will be conducted by the Sharon Health Department
- The Health Agent will have the authority to grant a single 6-month extension for compliance if the law causes undue hardship to a business, or if a business needs additional time to draw down its inventory of plastic bags.
- Bi-annual inspections will be conducted (on the same schedule as the food safety inspections), or when a complaint has been received.
- Violators of the plastic bag ban will include a written warning for the first offense, a \$50 fine for the second offense, and a \$100 fine for a third and any subsequent offenses.