

Commonly asked Questions about Yarmouth's Plastic Bag Ban



Why has the Town of Yarmouth banned disposable plastic checkout bags?

- The purpose of the Plastic Bag Ban is to reduce the environmental impacts related to disposable plastic bags and promote the use of reusable bags.
- This bylaw intends to phase out the use of disposable plastic bags by all businesses in the Town of Yarmouth from the effective date of this bylaw.

When will this ban take full effect in the Town of Yarmouth?

August 30, 2018

What does disposable plastic checkout bag mean?

- A plastic checkout bag with or without handles and a thickness of less than 4.0 mils.

How are these bags harmful to the environment?

- They add to roadside litter.
- They are difficult to recycle.
- They are produced from non-renewable sources
- They easily blow into the sea and are harmful to marine life.

Are there any exceptions?

- Newspaper delivery bags.
- Laundry or dry cleaning bags.
- Bags used to package bulk items, such as fruit, vegetable, nuts, etc.
- Contain or wrap frozen foods, raw meat or fish, whether packaged or not.
- Bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for food storage, garbage, etc.
- Bags used to wrap flowers, potted plants, or other items where dampness may be a problem.

What bags will be allowed?

- Customers may bring bags of their own choice into stores.
- Businesses are also encouraged to ask, before bagging items, if a customer would like a bag.
- Businesses are strongly encouraged to distribute paper bags, reusable bags, and boxes to customers with or without charge to help promote reusable bags.

Are any other bags affected?

- Raw food, bulk item bags and those used to protect against dampness must be made of bioplastic materials and compostable. See section 160-3 of the [bylaw](#) for definitions.
- Paper bags must be recyclable, made of 40% recycled materials and have proper labeling. See section 160-3 of the [bylaw](#) for more details.

Will deferments to compliance be allowed?

- A single three-month deferment may be allowed.
- Applicants for a deferment must provide the Board of Health with factual, documented support of undue hardship.
- Undue hardship is defined as situation unique to the Establishment in which there are no reasonable alternatives to the use of Disposable Plastic Checkout Bags or to comply with the requirement that Raw Food and Bulk Item Bags be made of bioplastic materials.

What are the penalties for non-compliance?

- First offense: written warning
- Second offense: \$100.00 fine
- Third and subsequent offense: \$200.00 fine

Need more information?

- Go online to read the [bylaw](#) at <http://www.yarmouth.ma.us/DocumentCenter/View/8660>
- For general inquiries, call 508-398-2231, x1515
- For questions concerning enforcement, call the Health Department at 508-398-2231, x1240.