

Single-Use Plastic Bags Banned in Philadelphia Starting October 1

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

Philadelphians use about a billion plastic bags each year, and many of these bags end up as litter on our streets and waterways. To improve the environmental quality and cleanliness of our city, Philadelphia has instituted a ban on certain plastic bags.

On July 1, the City announced that, starting October 1, retail stores will be prohibited from providing single-use plastic bags, as well as non-recycled paper bags. By April 1, 2022, the City will fully enforce the ban. <https://www.phila.gov/2021-06-23-what-you-need-to-know-about-the-citys-plastic-bag-ban/>

The legislation prohibits retail businesses from providing all single-use plastic bags, bags made from PLA (polylactic acid) created through a blown-film extrusion process, and paper bags that do not contain at least 40 percent recycled content. The ban applies to all types and sizes of retail businesses, indoor and outdoor, on-site and delivery, regardless of products sold.

Retail establishments will still be permitted to provide reusable bags made of nylon, cotton, polyester, or another machine-washable fabric that are specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuses, as well as reusable plastic bags that are not created through blown-film extrusion, are more than 2.25 mils thick, and are specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuses.

Retail establishments will also be permitted to provide paper bags that contain a minimum of 40 percent post-consumer recycled content, contain no old-growth fiber, clearly display the word "Recyclable" or "Recycled Content," and are labeled with the name of the manufacturer and the percentage of post-consumer recycled content of the bag.

The following bags are exempt: dry-cleaner bags; bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as garbage bags or to contain pet waste or yard waste; and bags used inside a retail establishment by a customer to deliver perishable items to the point of sale (including bags used to package bulk items, meats or fish, unwrapped prepared foods, bakery goods, flowers, potted plants, or similar items).

Businesses using prohibited bags after October 1 can be reported to 311. Until April 1, 2022, businesses will receive a warning to remind them about the ban. After that, any retail establishment that fails to comply will be subject to violation notices, which carry penalties of at least \$75. Each violation of the ordinance is subject to a separate fine. The City can take repeat offenders to court and ask the judge to impose higher penalties. If fines are not paid, a lien can be put on the business.



A colorful tote bag folds up into this compact pouch, which fits easily in purse or pocket for impromptu purchases. Made of polyester, washable, reusable, portable, and water resistant. Available in a variety of patterns. Purchase at Tselaine, 1927 Walnut.