



SUSTAINABLE STEPS

Brought to you by Arielle Gerstein,
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City of Charleston New Single-Use Plastic Regulations in Effect

Effective July 1, 2024: [Minor Amendment Updates to Regulations Include:](#)

- Prohibition of Extra Thick Plastic Bags: Businesses are no longer permitted to use extra thick plastic bags. Encouraging customers to bring reusable bags can help save costs and reduce waste. Providing a bag incentive refund at checkout and using signage in parking lots can promote this behavior. Paper bags are also permissible.
- Drive-thru and Take-out Utensil Policy: Drive-thru and take-out businesses may still offer disposable cutlery, but only upon customer request, affirmative response, or through self-service stations or dispensers. This measure aims to reduce unnecessary automatic inclusion of utensils in to-go bags, thereby saving costs and minimizing plastic waste.



CITY OF CHARLESTON

Plan Ahead for New Single-Use Plastics Guidelines

REVISED EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2024

Since January 1, 2020, operations throughout Charleston have been required to eliminate single-use plastic carryout bags and certain plastic food packaging.



Beginning July 1, 2024, extra thick plastic carryout bags are not allowed, and cutlery is only allowed by customer request or at self-service stations.

These measures will mean cleaner city streets and ocean waters, but we know they also mean changes for you and your customers. Use this guide to learn more about alternatives that will work for your organization.

WHO NEEDS TO GET READY?

The guidelines apply to all commercial and nonprofit operations including:

- Concession/event vendors and food trucks
- Farmers markets/stands and takeout stands
- Schools and government
- Grocery and liquor stores
- Restaurants (including drive thrus) and bars
- Retail stores

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What's IN?

Establishments are able to choose from numerous affordable alternatives and certain specialty items will still be allowed.

✓ Reusable Bags and Recyclable Paper Bags



✓ REUSABLE BAGS

- Cloth or other machine washable fabric
- With stitched handles
- A minimum lifetime of 125 uses and clear display of information on reuse/recycling



✓ RECYCLABLE PAPER BAGS

- Paper bags of all sizes
- With and without handles
- Including glossy gift bags with handles



✓ Recyclable or Compostable Disposable Food Containers and Service Ware

Food service ware, containers and packaging made out of materials that are compostable¹ or are accepted by the Charleston County recycling program² including:

- ✓ Aluminum
- ✓ Cardboard
- ✓ Glass
- ✓ Paper
- ✓ Recyclable plastics



What's OUT?

Operations are required to stop using:

✗ Plastic Single-Use Carryout Bags

- ✗ Intended for one-time use to transport purchases
- ✗ With heat-fused handles
- ✗ Not included in the "Exceptions: Specialty Items" section (back page)



✗ Non-Recyclable and Non-Compostable Disposable Food Containers and Service Ware

Polystyrene (also known as plastic foam or Styrofoam™) and other non-recyclable and non-compostable food service ware, carryout containers and food packaging including:

- ✗ Bowls
- ✗ Clamshells
- ✗ Cups
- ✗ Plates
- ✗ Stirrers
- ✗ Straws



(See "Exceptions: Specialty Items" section on back)

✗ Operations also will be required to stop selling or renting polystyrene:

- ✗ Bowls, cups and plates
- ✗ Coolers, containers and ice chests
- ✗ Shipping boxes and packing material

✗ Unnecessary Cutlery

- ✗ Disposable cutlery is only allowed by customer request or at self service stations.

