



PLASTIC BAG BAN INFORMATION SHEET

Effective Date: July 1, 2015

Please note the changes to the plastic bag ban in red.



Overview

Revised Ordinance of Honolulu, Sections 9-9.1 through 9-9.4 regulate the use of plastic bags on Oahu. Effective July 1, 2015, businesses shall be prohibited from providing plastic checkout bags and non-recyclable paper bags to their customers at the point of sale for the purpose of transporting groceries or other merchandise. **Effective July 1, 2018**, businesses may provide, at the point of sale, reusable bags, compostable plastic bags, or recyclable paper bags for the purpose of transporting groceries or other merchandise **provided they charge the customer a minimum of 15 cents per bag**. Businesses are permitted to provide non-recyclable paper bags with or without charge to protect or transport prepared foods, beverages, or bakery goods.

Banned Plastic Bags

“Plastic Checkout Bag” means a carryout bag that is provided by a business to a customer for the purpose of transporting groceries or other retail goods, and is made from non-compostable plastic and not specifically designed and manufactured for multiple re-use.

Effective July 1, 2018, “Plastic Film Bag” will replace “Plastic Checkout Bag.” “Plastic Film Bag” means a bag made out of thin flexible sheets of plastic with a thickness of 10 mils or less.

EXEMPTIONS

The term “plastic checkout bag” does not include the following types of bags. The following types of bags are exempt from the ban and may continue in use.

- A. Bags used by customers inside a business to package loose items, such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, ground coffee, grains, candies, or small hardware items;
- B. Bags used to contain or wrap frozen foods, meat or fish, flowers or potted plants, or other items to contain dampness;
- C. Bags used to protect or transport prepared foods, beverages, or bakery goods, including takeout bags used at restaurants, fast food restaurants, and lunch wagons, to transport prepared foods;
- D. Bags provided by pharmacists to contain prescription medications;
- E. Newspaper bags for home newspaper delivery;
- F. Door-hanger bags;
- G. Laundry, dry cleaning, or garment bags, including bags provided by hotels to guests to contain wet or dirty clothing;
- H. Bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended for use as garbage, pet waste, or yard waste bags;
- I. Bags used to contain live animals, such as fish or insects sold in pet stores;
- J. Bags used to transport chemical pesticides, drain-cleaning chemicals, or other caustic chemicals sold at the retail level; provided that this exemption shall be limited to one bag per customer.

Acceptable Bags

1. **“Compostable Plastic Bag”** means a checkout bag that is provided to a customer for the purpose of transporting groceries or other retail goods, that meets the current ASTM D6400 Standard Specifications for compostability and that is labeled:
 - a) With the Biodegradable Product Institute (BPI) logo as meeting the ASTM standard for compostability; and
 - b) With “Compostable” on both sides of the bag in either green color lettering that is at least one inch in height, or as otherwise specified; or within a green color band that is at least one inch in height in order to be readily and easily identifiable.**Effective January 1, 2020, compostable plastic bags shall no longer be provided.**
2. **“Recyclable Paper Bag”** means a paper bag that: (1) is one hundred percent recyclable, (2) contains a minimum of forty percent post-consumer recycled content, and (3) displays the words “Reusable” and “Recyclable” in a highly visible manner on the outside of the bag.
3. **“Reusable Bag”** means a bag with handles that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse and is made of:
 - (1) cloth or other washable fabric; or
 - (2) durable material suitable for reuse, including plastic that is at least 2.25 mils thick.**Effective January 1, 2020, plastic film bags with a thickness of 10 mils or less shall no longer be considered “Reusable Bags.”**

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the City's Recycling Branch at **768-3200** or visit **opala.org**.