



Single-use Plastic Bag Ban FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR BUSINESSES

The Town of Port Royal has adopted a Single-Use Plastic Bag Ordinance, which is similar to Ordinances adopted by Beaufort County and other municipalities in the county. The Ordinance bans the use of certain disposable plastic carryout shopping bags. We are providing this Frequently Asked Questions guide for businesses potentially affected by the ban.

When does the Ordinance go into effect?

November 1, 2018.

What businesses are affected by the Ordinance?

Most retail establishments are subject to the new Ordinance, including grocery stores, department stores, hardware stores, liquor stores, convenience stores, farmers markets, restaurants, gift shops, and other retail stores or vendors. There is no exemption for small retailers.

Are there any differences between the County and municipal Ordinances?

No. The Ordinances have the same restrictions on single-use carryout plastic bags.

What bags are restricted by the Ordinance?

Plastic bags considered disposable and not reusable are prohibited. This includes all disposable plastic bags provided at checkout or point-of-sale.

What exemptions are allowed?

The following types of plastic bags are allowed for the following uses:

- Laundry dry cleaning bags.
- Meat, produce and bakery bags.
- Laundry or dry cleaning.
- Newspaper and door-hanger bags.
- Pet waste, yard waste and garbage bags.
- Bags provided by pharmacists or veterinarians to contain prescription drugs or other medical necessities, as required by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- Bags for items sold in bulk such as bulk food and bulk hardware items.
- Bags or plastic wraps for flowers, potted plants or items where dampness may be an issue.
- Bags of any type that a customer brings to the store for his or her own use to carry away goods that are not placed in a bag provided by the store.
- Bags comprised of recyclable plastic, with a minimum thickness of 2.25 mils.

Can retailers provide plastic bags for meat, produce, bulk foods and other items?

Yes. Plastic bags that are used inside stores for bulk foods and other items, for meats and produce, unwrapped bakery goods, flowers and other similar items will still be allowed. Only disposable bags used at retail checkout are prohibited.

Is there an exemption for clothing stores?

No. Clothing stores must follow the same requirements as other retailers.

What standards must I abide by?

Business establishments are encouraged to provide customers with reusable carryout bags or recyclable paper bags.

What type of bag is considered reusable?

A reusable carryout bag is a carryout bag that is specifically designed and manufactured for multiple use and meets the following criteria:

- Language describing the bag's ability to be reused and recycled should be highly visible on the exterior of the bag.
- The bag has a handle, except that handles are not required for bags constructed out of recyclable paper with a height of less than 14 inches and width of less than eight inches.
- The bag is constructed of cloth, other washable fabric, or other durable materials, whether woven or non-woven; or recyclable plastic, with a minimum thickness of 2.25 mils.

What is the Town's plan for informing customers of the Ordinance?

Information is posted on the Town's website. We will do outreach through social media, news media and other means to reach retailers and customers.

How should I get ready for the Ordinance going into effect on November 1, 2018?

To prepare, please carefully review the Ordinance. Call us if you have any questions or need clarification.

Are retailers allowed to use up existing stocks of plastic bags after November 1, 2018?

No. The Ordinance was adopted on February 14, 2018, allowing several months for affected retailers to plan for the transition. We encourage businesses to use up existing stock as quickly as possible. Retailers that are a part of a chain should work with their corporate offices on a transition plan.

How will this Ordinance be enforced?

Code enforcement officers with The Town of Port Royal will periodically conduct spot checks to ensure that business establishments comply with the law. Businesses may be issued a warning for first offenses. If a business is found to be out of compliance after a warning, the Town may initiate penalties in accordance with the law.

What is the purpose of this Ordinance?

The goal of this legislation is improve our environment by curbing the use of plastic bags and making a shift to reusable bags. Plastic bags can escape into our waterways and the ocean, where they are harmful to animals. They break down into smaller pieces of plastic that enter the food chain of animals and eventually that of humans.

Who may I call for additional information?

At the Town of Port Royal, you may contact Codes Enforcement at (843) 986-2225.