

# PLASTIC BAG BAN INFORMATION SHEET

**Please note: effective January 1, 2021, the Disposable Foodware Ordinance (Ordinance 19-30 / Bill 40) amends the Plastic Bag Ban definitions of both "Plastic checkout bag" and "Plastic film bag", which includes modifications to the bag exemptions. It also adds a new definition for "Plastic". For details, read the Disposable Foodware Ordinance on the [opala.org](http://opala.org) Plastic Bag Ban Page. Comprehensive details on the Disposable Foodware Ordinance to come summer 2020.**

## Overview

Revised Ordinance of Honolulu, Sections 9-9.1 through 9-9.4 regulate the use of bags on O'ahu, effective July 1, 2015. Businesses are prohibited from providing plastic checkout bags, plastic film bags, compostable plastic bags and non-recyclable paper bags to their customers at the point of sale for the purpose of transporting groceries or other merchandise. Businesses may provide, at the point of sale, recyclable paper bags or reusable bags (including plastic film bags made of thin flexible sheets of plastic thicker than 10 mils) for the purpose of transporting groceries or other merchandise provided they charge the customer a minimum of 15 cents per bag.



Plastic Film



Compostable Plastic



Reusable Plastic  
unless >10 mils (15¢)



Reusable Cloth or  
Washable Fabric



Reusable Paper



Recyclable Paper

## Acceptable Bags

1. **"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.
2. **"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 thicker than 10 mils.

## Exemptions

The following types of bags are exempt from the ban and may continue in use. **Effective January 1, 2021, the Disposable Foodware Ordinance amends these exemptions.**

- 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



For details, definitions, history, & frequently asked questions, visit the [opala.org](http://opala.org) Plastic Bag Ban page.  
Contact the City's Recycling Branch at [businessrecycle@honolulu.gov](mailto:businessrecycle@honolulu.gov) or 768-3200 ext. 6.

