

Commonly Asked Questions Regarding Barnstable's Plastic Bag Ban & the Answers



1. Why has the Town of Barnstable banned thin film plastic bags?
 - a. The purpose of the Plastic Bag Ban for bags less than 3.0 mils. is to help reduce the environmental impacts related to plastic bags and promote a shift towards the use of reusable bags.
 - b. This bylaw is to help phase out the use of thin film plastic bags by all businesses in the Town of Barnstable over a period of 12 months from the effective date of this chapter.

2. When will this ban take full effect on the Town of Barnstable?
 - a. Monday, October 3rd, 2016

3. What does thin film plastic bag mean?
 - a. A plastic carryout bag with integral handles and thickness less than 3.0 mils.

4. How are these bags that are less than 3.0 mils. harmful to the environment?
 - a. They are produced from non-renewable sources.
 - b. Difficult to recycle.
 - c. Harm our local oceans and the animal's homes.
 - d. Adds to roadside litter.

5. What are some ways for the public to remember to bring their reusable bags with them to the store?
 - a. Have a designated spot in your car or purse.
 - b. Put them near stuff that you never would leave the house without, such as keys, cell, etc.

6. Are there any exceptions?
 - a. Bags used by customer inside businesses:
 1. Package bulk items, such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, candy or small hardware items.
 2. Contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, or fish, whether packaged or not.

3. Contain or wrap flowers, potted plants, or other items where dampness may be a problem.
 - b. Laundry or dry-cleaning bags or bags sold in packages containing multiple bags intended to be used for home food storage, garbage, waste, pet waste or yard waste.
 - c. Product bags.
 - d. Nothing stops customers from bringing in their own bags of their choosing into stores.
 - e. Businesses might and are strongly encouraged to distribute paper bags, reusable bags, and boxes to customers with or without charge to help promote reusable bags.
7. Will there an exemption granted?
 - a. Businesses will have to apply for an exemption **before the October 3, 2016 start date.**
 - b. However the Town Manager makes the final decision to grant or deny and this decision will be made final.
 - c. Exemptions will have an expiration date and when that date comes no more exemption or exceptions will be made by the Town to the businesses in the Town of Barnstable.
8. Will there be a cost like other surrounding towns and surrounding areas?
 - a. This means businesses have to provide reusable bags with or without charge in the Town of Barnstable.
 - b. This is additionally true if the customer has requested to use a voucher issued under the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women and Infant and Children (WIC) pursuant to M.G.L.
9. What happens if a business does not abide by this bylaw?
 - a. First Offense: Written Warning
 - b. Second Offence: \$100.00 Fine
 - c. Third and Subsequent Offence: \$200.00 Fine and the Town may in its discretion publish the Fine on its website after the third and subsequent offence.
10. How can you get more information?
 - a. For more information and any questions feel free to call (508) 862-4672.