



WEST COAST SINGLE-USE PLASTIC REGULATIONS

Frequently Asked Questions

The following information has been developed to help businesses and staff answer questions about the new single-use plastics regulations bylaw

Why is reducing the amount of single-use items important?

The average Canadian uses between 200-300 bags each year. Similarly, approximately 57 million straws are used in Canada every day - which either end up in municipal waste streams or as litter in public places and the environment.

Each year, at least 8 million tonnes of plastics leak into the ocean - which is equivalent to dumping the contents of one garbage truck into the ocean every minute.

Around the world, plastic bags are consistently listed as a top ten item found littered on beaches.

By reducing the creation of waste from single-use items and the associated municipal costs, the District of Ucluelet will be able to better steward municipal property, including sewers, streets, parks, beaches and waterways.

What types of businesses would the Bylaw affect?

All business operating in the District of Ucluelet would be included in the Bylaw.

What type of items would be regulated under the Single-Use Items Regulation Bylaw?

The Bylaw proposes to prohibit businesses from providing customers with single-use plastic bags and plastic drinking straws.

Under the proposed Bylaw, businesses would be able to provide customers with paper checkout bags for a minimum charge of \$0.25, and reusable checkout bags for a minimum charge of \$2.00.

In addition to conventional plastic bags and straws, the proposed Bylaw also prohibits plastic bags and plastic straws marketed as "biodegradable" or "compostable".

"Biodegradable" and "compostable" plastics do not degrade readily without industrial compost facilities (not available on the coast), and damage recycling and processing equipment when mistaken for and mixed with conventional plastic bags and straws.

Will there be exemptions to the proposed Bylaw?

Yes - The proposed Bylaw is considering a list of exemptions. Some exemptions could include:

- Small paper bags that are less than 15 centimetres by 20 centimetres when flat
- Bags for loose bulk items such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, and candy
- Bags for loose small hardware items, including nails and bolts
- Bags that contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, poultry, or fish
- Wrapping for flowers or potted plants
- Bags that protect prepared foods or bakery goods that are not pre-packaged
- Bags that contain prescription drugs received from a pharmacy

- Bags that protect linens, bedding, or other similar large items that cannot easily fit in a reusable bag

The proposed Bylaw does not apply to the sale of plastic bags intended for use at the customer's home or business (i.e. garbage bags, recycling bags, sandwich bags), nor to the sale of plastic drinking straws intended for use in the customer's home. The intent of the bylaw is to reduce the amount of single-use plastic bags used for transporting goods from a business to the home.

The Bylaw also proposes to permit plastic bags to be distributed that have already been used by a customer and that have been returned to the business for the purpose of being reused by other customers.

How do you define "Reusable Bag"?

"Reusable Bag" is defined as a bag with handles that is for the purpose of transporting items purchased by the customer from a Business and is designed and manufactured to be capable of at least 100 uses.

We encourage Businesses to consider the environmental impacts of any reusable bags they are supplying to customers. Overconsumption of paper and reusable bags is not the answer, and we encourage businesses to promote "BYOBag" culture wherever possible.

Check out our [Tips for Businesses, Tips for Frontline Staff and Template Social Media Posts](#) for ideas!

Can businesses provide paper or reusable bags for free?

No - In order to discourage the proliferation of paper and reusable bags, businesses would need to first ask whether the customer needs a bag, and charge a minimum of \$0.25 per paper bag, and \$2.00 per reusable bag.

There would be no minimum fee for small paper bags (less than 15 centimetres by 20 centimetres when flat) and some paper and plastic bags are exempt altogether from the restrictions of the Bylaw:

- Package loose bulk items;
- Contain or wrap fresh or frozen meat, poultry or fish;
- Wrap flowers;
- Protect baked goods and non-packaged foods;
- Contain prescription drugs; or
- Contain large items that cannot easily fit into a reusable bag.

When will the Bylaw come into effect?

We are expecting the Bylaw to be effective as of June 8, 2019, with a phase-in period to allow businesses to use up stock, educate customers, and find new suppliers. Enforcement provisions (fines) are being planned to come into effect January 1, 2020.

How will this Bylaw be enforced?

The District of Ucluelet's primary focus will be on developing education and awareness. We will work with retailers to promote compliance before moving to enforcement.

After an initial phase-in period, the District will begin administering fines between \$75 and \$200.