

FACT SHEET FOR BUSINESSES

Effective January 1, 2016, Reusable Bags will be required at Checkout



The Port Aransas City Council approved the Ban the Bag Ordinance, which takes effect January 1, 2016. The ordinance calls for the regulation of single use plastic checkout bags, prohibiting establishments from using them at checkout points. There are a few exceptions to this, as will be noted below.

Instead, at checkout counters within retail establishments in Port Aransas, the consumer will have a choice of either requesting their products be placed in brown paper bags, or they may bring their own reusable bags. It is also encouraged that businesses have reusable bags available for sale at checkout counters so that those forgetting their bag may have an opportunity to purchase a reusable bag. The City of Port Aransas encourages a shift to reusable bags.

What types of businesses are affected?

The new rules apply to all businesses in Port Aransas or temporary vendors that provide carryout bags to their customers, that sell perishable or nonperishable goods, including clothing, food and personal items directly to the customer and located within the geographical limits of the City of Port Aransas. These businesses include but are not limited to grocery and convenience stores, restaurants, hardware stores, department stores, bookstores, sporting goods stores, gift shops, resale shops and other types of retailers that sell perishable or nonperishable goods. There are some exemptions to the requirements for certain businesses and items, which are listed below.

Exemptions

The following bags are exempt from the Single-Use Plastic Checkout Bag Ordinance:

Plastic Bags used for the purpose of containing bait or seafood sales

Plastic Bags used to provide food safety for a purchaser of food by preventing contamination from any raw food; i.e. fruits, vegetables, raw meat, raw seafood or raw poultry

Packages of multiple bags intended for disposal of trash, pet waste or yard trimmings.

Prohibitions and Requirements

Affected retail establishments are prohibited from providing plastic checkout bags to their customers at the point of sale. Reusable bags and recyclable paper bags are allowed alternatives.

Affected retail establishments are strongly encouraged to provide incentives for the use of reusable bags through education, credits, rebates or tokens for individuals who bring reusable bags.

Nothing in this section shall be read to preclude affected retail establishments from making reusable or recyclable paper bags available for sale or free to customers.

No person shall distribute plastic checkout bags at any City sponsored event, City Facility, or any event held on City property.

Penalty Clause

Any violation of this Ordinance may be punished by a fine not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500.00) for each offense or for each day such offense shall continue.

Bag Standards

Businesses can provide any of these reusable bag options at checkout: Cloth, or other fabric or other durable material suitable for reuse, and has durable built-in handles or drawstrings. Or,



Paper bags that meet the following requirements:

1. Contains no old growth fiber;
2. Is 100% recyclable
3. Contains a minimum of 40% post-consumer recycled content; and
4. Displays the words “*Reusable*” or “*Recyclable*” in a highly visible manner on the outside of the bag.

The ordinance does not require businesses to charge a fee for any bag, though businesses may set a price for reusable bags. Customers may also bring their own reusable bags from home.

Checklist for Businesses

1. Review the bag standards and decide which types of bags to offer customers (if any).
2. Identify bag suppliers that can provide bags that meet the ordinance requirements.
3. It is recommended that businesses post signs to be placed near points-of-sale (registers) and in your parking lot to remind patrons of the ordinance. It is suggested that signs should be in English and Spanish.



4. Train your employees about implementing the new rules, including bag standards, best practices for responding to customer questions and tips for properly filling a variety of reusable totes. Ask employees to encourage customers to bring reusable bags.

Read the Fact Sheet for Businesses and the FAQs for more information. Contact City Hall at (361)749-4111 if you still have questions about the types of bags you can offer and other requirements or if you'd like help finding bag suppliers. We can also send a representative out to speak to your employees and to answer any questions about the Ban the Bag Port Aransas Ordinance.

Other Suggestions

Offer incentives or a credit to customers who shop with reusable bags.

Consider selling reusable bags.

Place copies of the Fact Sheet for Shoppers checkout counters for customers or employee reference.

Consider installing reusable bag racks in place of plastic bag carousels to hold reusable bags up while packing.

Place signs by each checkout counter reminding customers of the Single Use Plastic Bag Ban.