



CHECKOUT BAG BYLAW

Answers to frequently asked questions

IN EFFECT MAY 22, 2022



What types of businesses are covered by the Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw?

All businesses operating within the District of Sooke.

What bags does this bylaw apply to?

This bylaw applies to plastic bags “intended to be used by a customer for the purpose of transporting items purchased or received by the customer from the business providing the bag” and “bags used to package take-out or delivery of food.”

What does this bag not apply to?

This bylaw does not apply to small plastic bags used for such things as loose produce or bulk goods, wrapping of meat products, and a number of other types of bags listed as specific exemptions in the bylaw.

Can't we just switch to biodegradable alternatives or bioplastics?

Unfortunately, bioplastics present many of the same issues as traditional fossil fuel-based plastics. They are resource-intensive, rely on fossil fuels for production and typically do not rapidly biodegrade under natural conditions – like in the ocean.

Are there requirements for paper bags?

Yes. According to Bylaw's definition, a paper bag must be made out of paper and contain at least 40% of post-consumer recycled paper content. Paper bags must also display the words “Recyclable” on the outside of the bag. These requirements do not apply to paper bags smaller than 15 centimetres by 20 centimetres when flat.

What are some examples of reusable checkout bags?

There are many types of reusable checkout bags that are designed to be capable of at least 100 uses. Examples of durable and reusable bags materials include synthetic fabrics like nylon, polyester and polypropylene.

Please tell me more about a “Take a bag, leave a bag” program.

Businesses can give a used bag to a customer as long as the bag meets the requirements of the bylaw for paper or reusable bags. Used plastic bags cannot be provided. Fees do not have to be charged for used bags. This means that businesses can develop programs to take back surplus bags and offer these used bags to customers for no charge. Businesses can offer prizes for people who donate used bags or provide credit to customers when they return a bag. Creative solutions like these that support the reuse of bags are encouraged.



What happens if a customer asks for a bag after the sales transaction is completed? Does a fee still need to be charged for the bag?

The fee must still be charged to meet the terms of the bylaw.

Can businesses use up their existing checkout bag stock past the May 22, 2022 bylaw implementation date? Do businesses have to charge a fee for checkout bags when using up existing stock?

No. The bylaw is set to take effect on May 22, 2022. After this date, businesses are prohibited from giving out plastic bags.

Will businesses be permitted to sell plastic bags sold in packages?

Yes. The Bylaw does not restrict the sale of bags intended for use at the customer's home or business (garbage bin liners, sandwich bags, compost liners, etc.).

Who gets to keep the funds collected from bag fees?

The fee will be charged and collected by individual businesses. These fees will help businesses recover the cost of bags, while also decreasing demand for single-use checkout bags.

How will the bylaw be enforced?

The Bylaw states that an individual can be fined between \$50 and \$500, while a corporation can be fined between \$100 and \$10,000 dollars. These amounts are consistent with other District bylaws. The District would always intend to provide education, guidance, and warnings before any financial penalty, wherever possible.

General FAQs

Why is reducing the amount of single-use checkout bags important?

The purpose of the bylaw is to regulate the use of single-use checkout bags by businesses and, as a result, reduce plastic bag litter and waste in our community and the landfill. Some municipalities report residents use approximately 200 bags each every year, which indicates the positive impact this change can have on the environment.

Can residents continue to use plastic bags that they already have after the bylaw comes in effect on May 22, 2022?

Yes, residents can continue to reuse their existing plastic bags. The bylaw regulates business practices and states that new single-use plastic bags cannot be distributed to customers after May 22.

Where can plastic bags be recycled?

The CRD keeps an up to date list of depots [here](#). The [Recycling Council of British Columbia](#) is also a good resource for finding out where to recycle specific materials.