

# Business FAQs for Plastic Bag Ordinance

## Why is Cheltenham Township banning plastic bags?

Plastics are a serious threat to the environment and contribute to climate change.

## When does the ordinance go into effect?

The ordinance goes into effect on **January 1, 2024** and allows for a 90-day transition period. All businesses must be fully compliant no later than **April 1, 2024**.

## Which businesses does this affect?

The ban will affect all stores and retail establishments in Cheltenham, including but not limited to:

- Drug stores and pharmacies
- Supermarkets, grocery stores, farmers markets, convenience stores, food marts
- Restaurants and take-out food establishments
- Businesses that sell clothing, hardware, or any other nonperishable goods.

## What plastic bags are banned?

Single-use plastic bags are banned, regardless of thickness. The full definition is in the ordinance.

## Are there any exemptions?

Yes, exemptions include bags used inside a store by a customer to deliver items to the point-of-sale:

- Bags used to package bulk items such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains or candy
- Bags used to contain meat, fish or unwrapped prepared foods or baked goods
- Bags used solely to contain live animals, such as fish or insects sold in a pet store
- Bags for trash, food storage, and pet waste sold in packages containing multiple bags

In addition, laundry and dry-cleaning bags, newspaper bags, and bags used for mailing are exempt.

## What kind of bags can businesses provide?

Businesses can provide paper bags meeting the specifications listed in the ordinance, made of minimum 40% recycled content and labeled clearly with manufacturer and % recycled content.

- Businesses **must** charge customers not less than \$0.10 per bag and the fee must be listed separately on the receipt.
- A partial list of vendors that provide compliant bags is on the Township website.

## Can businesses provide reusable bags?

Yes, businesses can provide reusable bags for consumers to purchase, defined by the ordinance as 1. Cloth or other machine-washable material with stitched handles or 2. Polypropylene with stitched handles.

## What are the signage requirements?

From January 30 through July 31, 2024 businesses must post signage informing customers that single-use plastic bags and non-recycled paper bags will not be provided after April 1, 2024.

## Can businesses use biodegradable/compostable plastic bags?

No, the ordinance bans any kind of single-use plastic bag used at the point of sale.

## Can a business request an exemption from the requirements of the ordinance?

Yes, a business with a unique circumstance may request, in writing, an exemption of the requirements of the ordinance for one year. For more information, contact [marketing@cheltenhampa.gov](mailto:marketing@cheltenhampa.gov).

## How will the plastic bag ordinance be enforced?

When visiting a business for any reason, the Township code enforcement officer will check for compliance. In addition, residents will be able to report possible violations to the Township. In the event of non-compliance, the Township will first send a written warning notice. For further non-compliance, the Township will impose fines of \$500 to \$1,000 per occurrence.

For more information including the complete ordinance, go to the Township website at [cheltenhampa.gov](http://cheltenhampa.gov) > Community > About Us > Sustainable Cheltenham > Single-use Plastic Bag Ban.

