



# **SINGLE-USE ITEM BY-LAW GUIDE**

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## **JULY 2021**



**[VANCOUVER.CA/REDUCE-SINGLE-USE](https://vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use)**

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## TOOLKITS

Toolkits with educational materials are available to help businesses, charities and not-for-profits communicate these by-law changes to staff and customers.

Download or order your toolkit by mail at [vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use](https://vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use)

Toolkits include:

- Till topper tent cards (for point of sale)
- Posters
- Digital files for checkout stands and menu screens
- Menu icon and sticker sheets for flexible plastic straws (for accessibility)
- Sample flexible plastic straws, individually wrapped in paper (for accessibility)
- FAQs

The toolkits are available in six languages:

- English
- Traditional Chinese
- Simplified Chinese
- Punjabi
- Vietnamese
- Filipino (Tagalog)

# REDUCING SINGLE-USE ITEMS DURING COVID-19

## BEING LEADERS IN SUSTAINABILITY AND WASTE REDUCTION IS STILL PART OF VANCOUVER'S DNA.

The City remains fully committed to reducing waste and litter from single-use items and transforming Vancouver into a zero waste community by 2040.

As we take steps to reduce waste from single-use items during COVID-19, we have worked to ensure all of our by-laws align with the latest public health guidelines and protect the health and safety of residents, businesses and their staff.

For the latest COVID-19 health requirements and resources, please visit:

- The Provincial Health Officer's web page for orders, notices and guidance.
- The British Columbia Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC), including the food business web page.
- Vancouver Coastal Health's environmental health and inspections web page.
- Work Safe BC.

**Enforcement during COVID-19:** Due to the extenuating circumstances of COVID-19, City staff are prioritizing outreach and education to ensure businesses have the support they need in order to comply with the single-use item by-laws. Enforcement will be reserved for cases of deliberate and harmful non-compliance after all outreach and education efforts have been exhausted. For more information on enforcement, go to **PAGE 26**.



**Single-use items represent the wastefulness of our modern throw-away society.**

The City's Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy targets reducing single-use items made from all types of materials, not just plastics. We recognize that all materials have environmental, social or resource impacts, which is why we've prioritized "Avoid, Reduce and Reuse". **We know we can't recycle our way to zero waste.**

# BY-LAWS AT A GLANCE



## FOAM CUPS AND FOAM TAKE-OUT CONTAINERS

Effective January 1, 2020 » [Go to page 6](#)

- Ban on foam cups and foam take-out containers.



## PLASTIC STRAWS

Effective April 22, 2020 » [Go to page 8](#)

- Flexible plastic straws, individually wrapped in paper, must be stocked by food vendors and provided to customers when requested (accessibility requirement).
- Ban on all other plastic straws, including: plastic made from fossil fuel products; and plastic that is labeled or described as compostable, degradable or made from plants or other biological materials like corn, potatoes, sugarcane, etc.



## UTENSILS

Effective April 22, 2020 » [Go to page 12](#)

- Single-use utensils can only be provided by request.
- Self-serve stations are allowed.
- This by-law covers single-use spoons, knives, forks and chopsticks of all material types.



## CUPS

Effective January 1, 2022 » [Go to page 14](#)

- A minimum fee of \$0.25 must be charged for each single-use beverage cup distributed.
- Food vendors must report to the City the number of single-use cups distributed in the past 12 months at every location with a business license.
- The cup reporting requirement is waived for each business location participating in a reusable cup-share program.



## SHOPPING BAGS

Effective January 1, 2022 » [Go to page 18](#)

### Plastic Shopping Bags

- Ban on plastic shopping bags, including: plastic made from fossil fuel products; and plastic that is labeled or described as compostable, degradable or made from plants or other biological materials.

### Paper Shopping Bags

- A minimum fee of \$0.15 must be charged for each paper bag distributed, minimum fee increases to \$0.25 in 2023.
- Paper shopping bags must contain at least 40% recycled content, and be labeled “recyclable” and “made of 40% recycled content.”
- If requested by the City, business license holders must report the number of paper shopping bags distributed during the previous 12 months.

### Reusable Shopping Bags

- A minimum fee of \$1 must be charged for each new reusable bag distributed, minimum fee increases to \$2 in 2023.
- New reusable shopping bags must be designed and manufactured to be capable of at least 100 uses, and made primarily of fabric.
- If requested by the City, business license holders must report the number of new reusable shopping bags distributed during the previous 12 months.

**COVID-19:** Under BC Centre for Disease Control guidelines, vendors can provide reusable cups and accept customers' reusable cups and reusable shopping bags during the COVID-19 pandemic.



# WHICH BY-LAWS APPLY TO YOUR ORGANIZATION

## SHOPPING BAGS

All businesses, charities and not-for-profits with a business license in Vancouver are required to comply with the shopping bag by-law, including:

- Food vendors (see list below)
- Second hand stores
- Vendors at festivals, special events and markets
- Retailers
- Street vendors

## FOAM, STRAWS, UTENSILS, CUPS AND SHOPPING BAGS

All food vendors with a Vancouver business license must comply with the by-laws for foam, plastic straws, utensils, cups and shopping bags. Food vendors are businesses, charities and not-for-profits that sell prepared food<sup>1</sup> or provide charitable food services.<sup>2</sup>

- Arenas
- Bakeries
- Bars, lounges
- Bed and breakfasts
- Breweries
- Cafés and tea shops
- Caterers
- Community centres
- Concessions
- Convenience stores
- Delis
- Drugstores
- Food courts
- Delivery services (that sell food)
- Food manufacturers
- Food retailers
- Food trucks
- Food vendors at festivals and events
- Food wholesalers
- Grocery stores
- Halls
- Limited service food establishments
- Liquor establishments
- Private schools
- Market outlets
- Not-for-profit corporations
- Registered charities
- Restaurants
- Street food vendors
- Theatres
- Venues

## EXEMPTIONS

Specific exemptions to each by-law are described throughout this guide.

If you are unsure what by-laws apply to your organization, visit [vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use](https://vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use) or contact our project team at [reducesingleuse@vancouver.ca](mailto:reducesingleuse@vancouver.ca)

<sup>1</sup> Food meant to be eaten without further cooking.

<sup>2</sup> Charitable food services are defined as providing food for free or at low cost by an organization that is incorporated and in good standing under the Societies Act, or registered as a charitable organization under the federal Income Tax Act.



# FOAM BY-LAW

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2020

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- All food vendors are banned from serving prepared food in white and coloured polystyrene foam cups and foam take-out containers.
- The ban includes cups, plates, bowls, trays, cartons and hinged (“clamshell”) or lidded containers.
- The ban applies to foam cups and containers used for food:
  - Consumed on the premises
  - Served as take-out or delivery
  - Packaged as leftovers.

### *Did you know?*

- 78% of Vancouverites support the foam ban. Your customers likely do, too.
- 84% of Vancouverites think quick-serve restaurants and cafés should provide reusable dishware for eating in.
- Only 6% of Vancouver residents reported that they bring foam to a recycling depot.
- The majority of foam cups and foam take-out containers are sent to landfill or incinerator.
- Foam was the 11th most common type of litter found on Canadian shorelines in 2019 according to the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup.

# YOUR TURN: COMPLY WITH THE BY-LAW

- ☐ **Find alternatives to foam:** The table at the back of this guide includes suggested alternatives to foam. For a complete and up-to-date list, visit [vancouver.ca/foam](http://vancouver.ca/foam)
- ☐ **Speak with your supplier:** Suppliers have been informed of the ban and can help you find affordable, reusable, recyclable and compostable alternatives.
- ☐ **Donate or sell all remaining foam cups and foam take-out containers:** Any remaining foam should be sold to businesses outside of Vancouver or donated to charitable food services (if they are accepting donations of foam cups and foam containers).
- ☐ **Sanitize reusable dishes:** Follow your food safety and sanitation plan approved by Vancouver Coastal Health to clean and sanitize your reusable dishes.

## Exemptions

### 1. Hospitals and community care facilities

The foam ban does not apply to food service for patients in hospitals or residents of community care facilities.

**Important:** The foam ban **does** apply to food vendors with a Vancouver business license whose premises are located in hospitals or community care facilities (for example: cafeterias, cafés) that serve prepared food to customers.

### Charitable food services (one-year exemption)

The by-law exempts charitable food services<sup>3</sup> from the ban on foam cups and foam take-out containers until January 1, 2021. However, given the extenuating circumstances of COVID-19, the City is using discretion on when and where to enforce Vancouver's by-laws to reduce single-use items. Within this discretion, charitable food services may continue to distribute single-use items with food or meals during COVID-19. Charitable food services are expected to begin working towards complying with the by-laws as soon as it is possible for them (either during or after COVID-19).

### 2. Foam trays used to package uncooked food

The foam ban does not apply to foam trays used for uncooked meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, or vegetables that require further preparation before they are eaten.

### 3. Foods packaged outside Vancouver

The foam ban does not apply to prepared foods packaged and sealed outside of Vancouver in foam cups and foam take-out containers.

### 4. Selling packages of foam cups and foam containers

Retailers are still permitted to sell packs of multiple foam cups or foam containers for personal use.



### Read the full by-law at [vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use](http://vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use)

By-law No. 12416  
By-law No. 12604

By-law to amend License By-law No. 4450 regarding polystyrene foam  
By-law to amend License By-law No. 4450 regarding charitable food services

<sup>3</sup> Organizations must be incorporated and in good standing under the Society Act, or registered as a charitable organization under the federal Income Tax Act to qualify for the charitable food services exemption.



# PLASTIC STRAW BY-LAW

Food vendors should regularly check BC Centre for Disease Control for the latest health and safety guidelines. Visit [bccdc.ca](https://bccdc.ca) and search “food businesses”.

EFFECTIVE APRIL 22, 2020

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

### *Accessibility Requirement (more on page 10)*

- **Businesses, charities and not-for-profits must stock flexible plastic straws individually wrapped in paper and provide them to customers when:**
  - A customer requests one.
  - The food vendor asks a customer if they need one, and the customer confirms that they do.
- **Anyone who asks for a flexible plastic straw should receive one. People are not required, and should not be asked, to provide any medical information to prove their need.**
- **Flexible plastic straws must be stored behind a counter to save them for people who need them.**

### *Ban on All Other Plastic Straws, including:*

- Plastics made from fossil fuel products.
- Plastic labeled or described as compostable or degradable (biodegradable, oxodegradable, photodegradable, etc.).
- Plastics made from plants or other biological materials (corn, potatoes, sugar cane, etc.), such as PLA (polylactic acid)
- Plastics mixed with plant fibres or other materials (sugar cane, etc.).
- Plastics labeled or described as bioplastics.
- Paper straws lined with any type of plastic.

### *Did you know?*

- In 2018, about 31 million plastic straws were thrown in the garbage in Vancouver. On top of that, an unknown number of plastic straws were littered in the natural environment.



# YOUR TURN: COMPLY WITH THE BY-LAW

- ☐ **Order flexible plastic straws, individually wrapped in paper, for accessibility:** These straws must be stocked and provided upon request by all food vendors. [A list of suppliers that sell these straws is available at vancouver.ca/straws](https://vancouver.ca/straws)
- ☐ **Speak with your supplier about alternatives to banned straws:** See pages 24–25 for suggested alternatives.
- ☐ **Apply for the bubble tea straw exemption if you serve bubble tea:** More information on the bubble tea exemption is on page 11. **Important:** bubble tea vendors are still required to stock and provide flexible plastic straws for accessibility.
- ☐ **Add the Accessible Straw Icon to your menus:** Add the icon (available in the toolkit) to your print and website menus to show patrons with disabilities that flexible plastic straws are available to them.
- ☐ **Update your software:** Update your online, mobile and telephone ordering systems to ensure that customers can request flexible plastic straws, if needed for accessibility. Here is sample wording you can use on your ordering platforms:

## **Flexible plastic straw (for accessibility)**

Flexible plastic straws are available for customers who are unable to drink without a straw, or have difficulty drinking, so that they can safely consume beverages and nutrition.

- ☐ **Train your staff:** Make sure staff understand the straw by-law and that anyone who asks for a flexible plastic straw receives one without being asked to provide any medical information to prove their need.
- ☐ **Keep flexible plastic straws behind the counter:** Not at self-serve stations.
- ☐ **Follow VCH sanitization guidelines if you serve drinks with reusable straws:** Follow your food safety and sanitation plan approved by Vancouver Coastal Health to clean and sanitize your reusable straws.

# PLASTIC STRAW BAN



## **Suggested Alternatives**

Straws that can be composted in the City of Vancouver's Green Bin program:

- Paper straws that are not lined with any type of plastic
- Pasta straws (however, may be an allergen)
- Rice and tapioca straws (however, may be an allergen)
- Straws made of grain stalks like hay and rye
- Straws made from pressed leaves
- Bamboo straws made of real, whole bamboo

**Reusable Straws:** Work with Vancouver Coastal Health to ensure you have systems in place to properly wash and sanitize reusable straws if you use them.



## **Banned**

Banned straws include those made of:

- Plastics made from fossil fuel products
- Plastic labeled or described as compostable or degradable (biodegradable, oxodegradable, photodegradable, etc.)
- Plastics made from plants or other biological materials (corn, potatoes, sugar cane, etc.), such as PLA (polylactic acid)
- Plastics mixed with plant fibres or other materials (sugar cane, etc.)
- Plastics labeled or described as bioplastics
- Paper straws lined with any type of plastic

**Important:** None of the materials listed above are accepted in the City of Vancouver's Green Bin program.



# ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENT

## *All Food Vendors Must Stock and Provide Flexible Plastic Straws Individually Wrapped in Paper*

Flexible plastic straws, individually wrapped in paper, meet the widest range of accessibility needs and ensure that customers who are unable to drink without a straw, or have difficulty drinking, can safely consume beverages and nutrition. People experiencing age-related physical restrictions, arthritis, auto-immune disease, autism, cerebral palsy, dental and oral conditions, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, neurological disease, spinal cord injuries, stroke recovery and rehabilitation, surgery recovery, and other illnesses and injuries, may rely on flexible plastic straws.

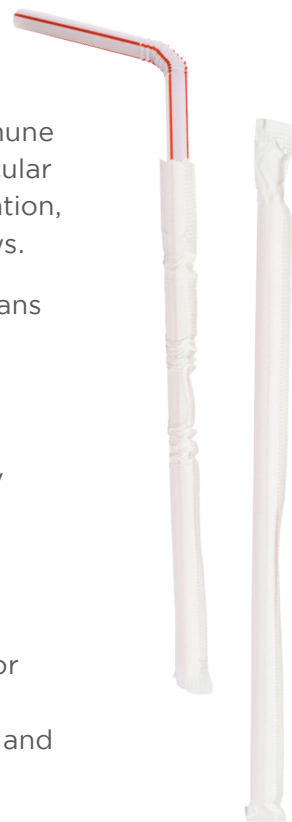
This requirement sets the highest standard for accessibility among plastic straw bans and prioritizes inclusion for all people in Vancouver's diverse communities.

### **Flexible Plastic Straw Specifications:**

- Plastic (made from fossil fuel products such as polypropylene);
- Must have a flexible section near the top that allows the straw to bend and stay in place;
- Suggested minimum length of 19.5 cm when the straw isn't stretched, and approximately 0.5 cm in diameter;
- Individually wrapped in paper.
- **Important:** Flexible plastic straws cannot be made from plastic that is labeled or described as compostable, degradable or made from plants or other biological materials. These plastics may dissolve in hot liquids or cause allergic reactions, and do not meet the accessibility requirement.

### **What to Call Flexible Plastic Straws and How to Advertise Their Need:**

- **Name:** Flexible plastic straw (for accessibility)
- **Description:** Flexible plastic straws are available for customers who are unable to drink without a straw, or have difficulty drinking, so that they can safely consume beverages and nutrition.



## MENU ICON FOR FLEXIBLE PLASTIC STRAWS

Add this icon to your menus to show customers that you are in compliance with the plastic straw by-law and that flexible plastic straws are available for customers who need them.

Download or order resources at [vancouver.ca/straws](https://vancouver.ca/straws) including:

- Posters
- Sample flexible plastic straws, individually wrapped in paper (for accessibility)
- Menu icon and sticker sheets for flexible plastic straws (for accessibility)
- Digital files for checkout stands and menu screens
- FAQs

*The menu icon was developed in consultation with the City of Vancouver's Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee.*



**Flexible Plastic Straws Available**

# Exemptions

## 1. Hospitals and Community Care Facilities

The plastic straw by-law does not apply to food service to patients in hospitals or residents of community care facilities.

**Important:** The plastic straw by-law **does** apply to food vendors with a Vancouver business license whose premises are located in hospitals or community care facilities (example: cafeterias, cafes) that serve prepared food to customers.

## 2. Drink Boxes and Pouches

The by-law does not apply to plastic straws attached to drink boxes and drink pouches.

## 3. Selling Packages of Plastic Straws

Retailers are still permitted to sell packages of at least 20 plastic straws for personal use.

## 4. One-Year Bubble Tea Straw Exemption

**Food vendors must apply for the bubble tea straw exemption at [vancouver.ca/straws](https://vancouver.ca/straws)**

A one-year exemption is available for plastic straws served with bubble tea drinks. The exemption allows food vendors to serve bubble tea with plastic straws until April 21, 2021.

The bubble tea straw exemption is not automatic and to be eligible, businesses must:

- Sell or serve bubble tea drinks; and
- Apply for the exemption by submitting the “bubble tea straw exemption” form to the City; and
- Submit an exemption form for each business location (if you have multiple locations in Vancouver).

### **Remember:**

- The bubble tea straw exemption only applies to plastic straws served with bubble tea. **All food vendors, including those that serve bubble tea drinks, must still comply with the ban on plastic straws for all other beverages (example: smoothies, cold drinks).**
- Food vendors who apply for the bubble tea straw exemption are still required to stock and provide flexible plastic straws and provide them to customer when requested (accessibility requirement).
- The purpose of the bubble tea straw exemption is to allow time for the market to offer alternative bubble tea straws that are not made from plastic.

During COVID-19, charitable food services may continue to distribute single-use items with food or meals, but are expected to begin working towards complying with the by-laws as soon as it is possible for them.



**Read the full by-law at [vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use](https://vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use)**

By-law No. 12618

By-law to amend License By-law No. 4450 regarding plastic straws



# UTENSILS BY-LAW

Check BC Centre for Disease Control for the latest COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. Visit [bccdc.ca](https://bccdc.ca) and search "food businesses".

EFFECTIVE APRIL 22, 2020

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- **This is a by-request by-law: single-use utensils can only be provided upon customer request.**
- **The by-law covers single-use spoons, knives, forks and chopsticks of all material types. Stir sticks are not included.**
- **Self-serve stations are allowed under the City's by-law. However, there may be restrictions from health authorities during the pandemic.**
- **For all dine-in, take-out, in-person, online and telephone orders, food vendors can only provide single-use utensils if:**
  - **The food vendor asks a customer if they want a single-use utensil, and the customer confirms that they do, or**
  - **A customer requests a single-use utensil, or**
  - **A customer helps themselves to a single-use utensil from a self-serve station.**
- **Food vendors cannot automatically include single-use utensils in orders and should not set tables with single-use utensils.**

## *Did you know?*

- 84% of Vancouverites agree that quick-serve restaurants or cafés should provide reusable dishware for eating in.
- 71% of Vancouverites believe they would reduce how often they used single-use items if they were asked if they wanted them before making a purchase.
- In 2018, about 103 million single-use utensils were thrown in the garbage in Vancouver—not including utensils that are littered in the natural environment. Two thirds were single-use chopsticks and wooden utensils.

# YOUR TURN: COMPLY WITH THE BY-LAW

- ☐ **Update your software:** Update your online, mobile and telephone ordering systems to ensure that single-use utensils are not automatically provided and that customers can request the utensils they need.
- ☐ **Adjust your space and systems:** Do not set tables with single-use utensils (this means no single-use utensils in baskets or at individual place settings).
- ☐ **Train your staff:** Ensure your staff know that single-use utensils can only be provided by-request or at self-serve stations, both when serving dine-in customers and when preparing take-out orders.
- ☐ **Avoid plastic utensils** that are made from fossil fuel products, and plastic that is labeled or described as compostable, degradable, or made from plants or other biological materials. These are not accepted in the City's Green Bin program or Recycle BC's residential recycling collection program. These materials contaminate existing recycling and composting streams and are not approved for composting under provincial regulation.
- ☐ **Choose:** When single-use utensils are required, look for alternatives that can be accepted in the City's Green Bin program, such as wood or bamboo. Suggested alternatives are on pages 24-25.
- ☐ **Switch to reusable utensils:** Speak with your suppliers about switching to reusable utensils, including chopsticks, for patrons who dine-in. Durable, washable and recyclable materials, such as metal, ceramic or hard plastic, are recommended.
- ☐ **Sanitize reusable utensils:** Follow your food safety and sanitation plan approved by Vancouver Coastal Health to clean and sanitize your reusable utensils.

## Exemptions

### 1. Hospitals and community care facilities

The utensils by-law does not apply to food service for patients in hospitals or residents of community care facilities.

**Important:** The utensils by-law **does** apply to food vendors with a Vancouver business license whose premises are located in hospitals or community care facilities (example: cafeterias, cafes) that serve prepared food to customers.

### 2. Selling packaged utensils in stores

Retailers are still permitted to sell packages of at least 20 single-use utensils sold for personal use.

During COVID-19, charitable food services may continue to distribute single-use items with food or meals, but are expected to begin working towards complying with the by-laws as soon as it is possible for them.



Read the full by-law at [vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use](https://vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use)

By-law No. 12620

By-law to amend License By-law No. 4450 regarding single-use utensils





# CUP BY-LAW

Check BC Centre for Disease Control for the latest COVID-19 health and safety guidelines. Visit [bccdc.ca](https://bccdc.ca) and search "food businesses".

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2022

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- Under the by-law, a minimum fee of \$0.25 must be charged for each single-use beverage cup distributed.
- Cup fees must be displayed on menu boards, menus and internet-based ordering platforms.
- Cup fees must be shown as a separate line item on any receipts provided to customers by using wording such as "CUP FEE".
- Food vendors must tell customers the amount of the cup fee for any orders placed over the phone.
- Starting with 2023 license renewals, food vendors must report the number of single-use cups distributed in the past 12 months at each licensed location when they renew their business license each year.
- The cup reporting requirement is waived for each business location participating in a reusable cup-share program.

### *Did you know?*

- In 2018, about 82 million single-use cups were thrown in the garbage in Vancouver.
- About 15% of large litter on Vancouver streets is single-use cups.



# YOUR TURN: COMPLY WITH THE BY-LAW

- ☐ **Where possible, make reusables the new norm:** As best practice, train staff to automatically offer a reusable cup for drinks to stay, and always ask customers if they need a single-use cup before providing one. Use the City of Vancouver's till toppers or digital graphics to prompt your customers.
- ☐ **Reusable cup-share program:** Consider offering your customers a cup-share program for drinks to go. Locations that participate in a cup-share program do not have to report to the City the number of disposable cups distributed per year. To learn more, see the box below.
- ☐ **Sanitize reusable cups:** Follow your food safety and sanitation plan approved by Vancouver Coastal Health to clean and sanitize your reusable cups.
- ☐ **Introduce "contactless cups":** Work with your Vancouver Coastal Health environmental health officer to develop a safe-handling procedure for travel mugs. The contactless cup methods on page 16 meet Vancouver Coastal Health requirements.
- ☐ **Update Point of Sale (POS) systems:** Update your in-store, online, mobile and telephone POS to charge fees on single-use cups and to ensure receipts display this fee as a separate line item. Fees are subject to GST and PST.
- ☐ **Update menus and menu boards to communicate the cup fee to customers:** Here is sample wording you can use on your menu board:

## Cup Fees:

To comply with City of Vancouver by-law requirements, we charge a minimum \$0.25 fee for single-use cups. Fees from cups will be used for/to \_\_\_\_\_.

- ☐ **Train your staff to communicate the cup fee to customers when taking orders over the phone.**
- ☐ **Be transparent with revenue from cup fees:** Show your customers how you are using the revenue from the cup fees. Posters to share this information are available as part of our business toolkit at [vancouver.ca/cups](http://vancouver.ca/cups).
- ☐ **Put a system in place to track the number of single-use cups you distribute each year:** You can track this using your electronic POS system, or other methods such as counting how many cups are in your inventory at the beginning and end of the year.
- ☐ **Report single-use cups distributed at locations that do not offer reusable cup-share:** Starting with the business license renewal for 2023, the number of single-use cups distributed at each licensed location in the past 12 months must be reported to the City, unless the location is participating in a reusable cup-share program that started anytime in the past year and is communicated to customers at the point of sale.



## *What is a reusable cup-share program?*

- A reusable cup-share program allows customers to receive their drink in a reusable cup that they can take to-go, and return to the business or another drop-off location at a later time.
- It's like car-share or bike-share, but for cups.

## CUP FEES

Food vendors keep fees from cups. Revenue from cup fees is not remitted to the City.

Food vendors are encouraged to use the fees to:

- Invest in reusable alternatives for single-use items, such as reusable cups for drinks to stay, commercial dishwashers, and reusable cup-share programs.
- Cover the cost of complying with the by-law, like software updates, training staff, etc.

Help your customers avoid fees and reduce waste by providing reusable cups for drinks to stay, participating in a reusable cup-share program, and encouraging customers to bring their own cup.

Discounts can still be offered to reward customers for choosing reusable cups.



## CONTACTLESS CUP METHODS

Used by cafes and restaurants around the world, these methods outline safe procedures for accepting reusable cups during the COVID-19 pandemic and are allowed by Vancouver Coastal Health.

### *Contactless Cup Method 1*

**Step 1.** Customer takes off the lid and places their clean reusable cup on a designated tray or in another container and steps back two metres.

**Step 2.** Staff moves the tray or container to where the drink will be prepared, making sure to prevent any contact with the customer's reusable cup.

**Step 3.** Without touching the customer's reusable cup, staff then pours the prepared drink into the customer's reusable cup.

**Step 4.** Staff bring the tray with the customer's reusable cup to a countertop where the customer can then take it away.

**Step 5.** Staff wash and sanitize trays and containers after every use.

### *Contactless Cup Method 2*

**Step 1.** Staff prepare the drink in a small jug or reusable "to stay" cup that has been washed and sanitized in a commercial dishwasher

**Step 2.** Staff or customer pours the drink into their travel mug.

**Step 3.** Staff wash and sanitize the cup or jug used for pouring.

# CUP BY-LAW

## Exemptions

### 1. Hospitals and community care facilities

The by-law does not apply to single-use cups used for food service to patients in hospitals and community care facilities.

**Important:** The by-law **does** apply to food vendors with a Vancouver business license whose premises are located in hospitals or community care facilities (for example: cafeterias, cafes) that serve prepared food to customers.

### 2. Charitable food services

Registered charities and not-for-profit corporations<sup>4</sup> are not required to charge fees on single-use cups used to provide beverages for free or at low-cost, or report the number of cups used for this purpose.

### 3. Food served in cups

The cup fee and reporting requirement do not apply to single-use cups used to serve prepared food, such as soup, pudding, frozen desserts, etc.

### 4. Selling packages of single-use cups in stores

Retailers are still permitted to sell packages of at least 6 single-use beverage cups sold for personal use.



**Read the full by-law at [vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use](https://vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use)**

By-law No. 12622  
By-law No. 12844

By-law to amend License By-law No. 4450 regarding single-use beverage cups.  
Amends By-law No. 4450 regarding the effective date of requirements for single-use beverage cups.

<sup>4</sup> Organizations must be incorporated and in good standing under the Societies Act, or registered as a charitable organization under the federal Income Tax Act to qualify for the charitable food services exemption.



# SHOPPING BAG BY-LAW

Reusable shopping bags are permitted by BC Centre for Disease Control during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Vendors should regularly check BC Centre for Disease Control for the latest health and safety guidelines. Visit [bccdc.ca](https://bccdc.ca) and search “food businesses”.

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2022

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

- This by-law is specific to shopping bags (i.e. a bag used by customers to transport items purchased or received from a business).
- Business license holders must first ask customers if they need shopping bags before providing them.
- If requested by the City, organizations must report the number of paper and new reusable shopping bags distributed in the past 12 months at each location.



### PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS

#### **BANNED**

Applies to plastic shopping bags of all thicknesses, made wholly or partially from:

- Plastics made from fossil fuel products
- Plastic labeled or described as compostable or degradable (biodegradable, oxodegradable, photodegradable, etc.)
- Plastic made from plants or other biological materials (corn, potatoes, sugar cane, etc.)
- Bioplastic



### PAPER SHOPPING BAGS

#### **Minimum fees:**

**\$0.15 - 2022**

**\$0.25 - 2023**

Other by-law requirements:

- Must contain at least 40% recycled paper content
- Must be labeled on the outside of the bag with the word “recyclable” and the amount of recycled content (e.g. “Recyclable. Made of 40% recycled content.”)
- Paper shopping bag fees must be shown as a separate line item on any receipts provided to customers.



### NEW REUSABLE SHOPPING BAGS

#### **Minimum fees:**

**\$1.00 - 2022**

**\$2.00 - 2023**

Other by-law requirements:

- Must be designed and manufactured to be capable of at least 100 uses
- Primarily made of fabric (see table on pages 24-25 for examples)
- Reusable shopping bag fees must be shown as a separate line item on any receipts provided to customers.



# YOUR TURN: COMPLY WITH THE BY-LAW

- ☐ **Speak with your supplier about alternatives to plastic shopping bags:** See pages 24–25 for suggested alternatives.
- ☐ **Remind customers of bag cleanliness:** Help to keep your staff safe by reminding customers to regularly clean their reusable bags. For further information, visit our website: [vancouver.ca/bags](http://vancouver.ca/bags).
- ☐ **Develop safe, accessible procedures for reusable bags:** Follow BC Centre of Disease Control guidelines for frequent handwashing to support your staff with handling reusable bags. Help customers with disabilities by bagging purchases in their reusable bags.
- ☐ **Update your Point of Sale (POS) systems:** Update your in-store, online, mobile and telephone POS systems to charge fees on paper and reusable shopping bags. Fees are subject to GST and PST.
- ☐ **Receipts:** All businesses are required to display bag fees as a separate line item on any receipts provided to customers by using wording such as “PAPER BAGS” and “REUSABLE BAGS”.
- ☐ **Put a system in place to track the number of paper and reusable shopping bags you distribute each year:** You can track the number of paper and reusable shopping bags you give out using an electronic POS, or other methods such as counting how many bags are in your inventory at the beginning and end of the year.
- ☐ **Train your staff/cashiers to ask customers if they need a paper or reusable shopping bag before providing one.**
- ☐ **Be transparent with revenue from bag fees:** Demonstrate to your customers how you are using revenue from bag fees.
- ☐ **Report shopping bags distributed to the City (if requested):** Report the number of paper and reusable shopping bags distributed in the past 12 months if requested by the City.
- ☐ **Donate or sell all remaining plastic shopping bags:** Any remaining plastic shopping bags should be sold to businesses outside of Vancouver or donated to charitable and not-for-profit organizations (if they are accepting donations of plastic bags). Charitable organizations sometimes provide empty plastic shopping bags to residents disproportionately affected by income inequality for various uses, such as garbage bin liners or to make footwear more waterproof.





## BAG FEES

- Businesses, charities and not-for-profits keep the fees from bags. Revenue from bag fees is not remitted to the City.
- Organizations are encouraged to use the fees to cover the cost of complying with the by-law, like software updates, training staff, etc.
- Businesses could also use fee revenue to fund the donation of reusable bags to non-profits and social enterprises that offer programs to residents disproportionately affected by income inequality.
- Help your customers avoid fees by encouraging them to bring their own bag.
- Discounts can be offered to reward customers for bringing their own reusable shopping bags.

## *Did you know?*

- In 2018, about 89 million plastic shopping bags and 4 million paper shopping bags were thrown in the garbage in Vancouver.
- Plastic bags were the sixth most common type of litter found on shorelines in 2019, according to the Great Canadian Shoreline Cleanup.
- 95% of Metro Vancouver residents already own at least one reusable shopping bag.

## *Charitable Food Services*

Given the extenuating circumstances of COVID-19, charitable food services may continue to distribute single-use items with food or meals during the pandemic. Charitable food services are expected to begin working towards complying with the by-laws as soon as it is possible for them (either during or after COVID-19).

# SHOPPING BAG BY-LAW

## Exemptions

### 1. “Bag-share” or “Take-a-Bag, Leave-a-Bag” Programs

Businesses, charities and not-for-profits are not required to charge fees on paper and reusable shopping bags that have already been used by a customer and returned to be re-used by other customers. They are also not required to report the number of bags distributed that have already been used by a customer at least once.

*Note: If a business, charity or not-for-profit provides a reusable bag-share program, they should work with Vancouver Coastal Health to address how they will sanitize them effectively within their sanitation plan. This means the reusable bag must be washable or constructed from a material that can be effectively sanitized.*

### 2. Charitable Food Services

Registered charities and not-for-profit corporations<sup>5</sup> are not required to charge fees on paper and reusable shopping bags used to provide food for free or at low cost, or report the number of bags used for this purpose.

### 3. Shopping Bags for Prescription Drugs

Pharmacies are not required to charge fees on paper and reusable shopping bags used to transport prescription drugs, or report the number of bags distributed for this purpose.

### 4. Small paper bags

Businesses, charities and not-for-profits are not required to charge fees on small paper bags (less than 15 cm x 20 cm when flat), or report the number of small paper bags distributed.

### 5. Large shopping bags

Plastic shopping bags used to transport linens, bedding or other similar large items that cannot easily fit in a paper or reusable shopping bag are permitted.

### 6. Bags that aren't shopping bags

The by-law is specific to shopping bags and does not apply to other types of bags. This means that there is no ban, required fees or reporting requirement for bags, made from any material, used to:

- Contain loose bulk items such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, or candy
- Contain loose small hardware items such as nails and bolts
- Protect bakery goods that are not pre-packaged prior to the point of sale
- Contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, poultry, or fish, whether pre-packaged prior to the point of sale or not
- Wrap flowers or potted plants
- Transport live fish
- Protect newspapers or other printed material intended to be left at the customer's residence or place of business
- Protect clothes after professional laundering or dry cleaning
- Line garbage and compost bins
- Collect pet waste
- Package sandwiches

*This list is not exhaustive. Other bags that do not meet the by-law definition of a shopping bag are also not subject to bans or required fees at this time.*



#### Read the full by-law at [vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use](https://vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use)

By-law No. 12624  
By-law No. 12843

By-law No. 12866

By-law to amend License By-law No. 4450 regarding shopping bags (amends By-law No. 4450 regarding the effective date of requirements for shopping bags)  
By-law to amend License By-law No. 4450 regarding shopping bag fee schedule

<sup>5</sup> Organizations must be incorporated and in good standing under the Societies Act, or registered as a charitable organization under the federal Income Tax Act to qualify for the charitable food services exemption.

# COMPOSTABLE AND DEGRADABLE PLASTICS

It's time for some myth busting. You might be surprised to find out what happens to these items after your customers are done with them.

## Fact #1

Plastic that is labeled or described as:

- compostable,
  - degradable (biodegradable, oxodegradable, photodegradable, etc.),
  - bioplastic, or
  - made from plants or other biological materials:
- **Is not designed to biodegrade if littered in the natural environment;**
  - **Is not accepted in the City's Green Bin organics program;**
  - **Contaminates existing composting and recycling streams; and**
  - **Is not approved for composting under BC Provincial regulation.**



## Fact #2

Plastic that is labeled or described as compostable or degradable is also not accepted in Recycle BC's residential recycling program.

## Fact #3

As contaminants, plastics that are labeled or described as compostable, degradable or made from plants, are most likely to be removed from local composting streams and then disposed to landfill or incinerator.



## WHAT TO CHOOSE INSTEAD



































The City encourages food vendors to choose reusable alternatives wherever possible. Otherwise, the City suggests alternatives made from materials that are accepted for composting in the City's Green Bin program or for recycling in the Recycle BC residential recycling program.

**Find a list of suggested alternatives on pages 24-25.**







ITEM	REUSABLE	RECYCLABLE Accepted in Recycle BC's residential recycling collection program	COMPOSTABLE Accepted in the City of Vancouver Green Bin
CONTAINERS	      <p>Ceramics   Tiffins   Steel trays/Containers   Plastic   Plastic bowls   Glass jars</p>	   <p>Paper containers coated in plastic   Aluminum containers   Plastic containers</p>	   <p>Moulded fibre or pulp containers   Paper plates and bags   Leaf plates and cups</p>
STRAWS	   <p>Metal straws   Glass straws   Silicone straws</p>	RECYCLABLE SUBSTITUTES ARE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE	   <p>Paper straws   Pasta straws   Hay straws</p>
UTENSILS	   <p>Metal cutlery and chopsticks   Wood or plastic chopsticks   Plastic and ceramic cutlery</p>	RECYCLABLE SUBSTITUTES ARE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE	  <p>Wood and bamboo utensils   Unpainted wood or bamboo chopsticks</p>
CUPS	   <p>Ceramics   Glassware   Reusable travel mugs</p>	  <p>Paper cups and containers coated with plastic   Rigid plastic cups with plastic lids</p>	COMPOSTABLE SUBSTITUTES ARE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE
SHOPPING BAGS	     <p>Cotton, canvas and string bags   Jute and burlap bags   Nylon and polyester   Recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET)   Woven and non-woven polypropylene (PP)</p>	 <p>Paper bags with paper or fibre handles</p>	COMPOSTABLE SUBSTITUTES ARE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

**Sourcing Reusable Shopping Bags:** The by-law requires that reusable shopping bags are designed and manufactured to be capable of at least 100 uses and are primarily made of fabric.

**Sourcing Paper Shopping Bags:** Paper shopping bags must contain at least 40% recycled paper content. Consider choosing paper shopping bags with even higher recycled content amounts.

Make the bags as recyclable as possible:

- avoid plastic windows, plastic layers, waxed paper, and lots of ink
- choose paper or fibre handles instead of rope, chord or ribbon

Ensure the bags are labelled on the outside with the words “Recyclable” and the amount of recycled content.





# ENFORCEMENT

**Charitable food services may continue to distribute single-use items with food or meals during COVID-19. Charitable food services are expected to begin working towards complying with the by-laws as soon as it is possible for them.**

Due to the extenuating circumstances of COVID-19, City staff are prioritizing outreach and education to ensure businesses have the support they need in order to comply with the single-use item by-laws.

If a business is found to be out of compliance with the single-use item by-laws that are in effect, initial City actions will focus on education, outreach and support to help them comply.

Following these initial education actions, increasing levels of enforcement may be applied to address non-compliant operators. Enforcement may include issuing tickets, which carry a fine of \$500 per offence, or further prosecutions in provincial court that could be subject to a maximum fine of \$10,000 per offence. Ongoing non-compliance may also result in business licence suspensions, or recommendations for business licence revocation.

**For the latest updates on enforcement, visit [vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use](https://vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use)**

## ***By-laws***

The provision for the \$500 fine is in the Ticket Offences By-law No. 9360.

# FEDERAL REGULATION OF SINGLE-USE ITEMS

The City has advocated for harmonized regulations at the provincial and federal level to reduce single-use items since we adopted our Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy in 2018.

The Federal government has announced their intention to regulate single-use items as early as 2021. If the Federal government proceeds with its regulations, Vancouver City Council may consider how these regulations affect its by-laws and change them.

Until then, Vancouver business licence holders are required to comply with the City's single-use item by-laws.

For more information on the Federal government's action on single-use items, visit [canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/zero-plastic-waste.html](https://canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/zero-plastic-waste.html)



**THANK YOU TO ALL BUSINESSES, CHARITIES AND  
NOT-FOR-PROFITS WHO ARE TAKING STEPS TO COMPLY  
WITH THE BY-LAWS AND ARE ACTIVELY WORKING  
TO REDUCE SINGLE-USE ITEMS AND LITTER IN  
VANCOUVER.**

**For more information:**

Phone: 3-1-1 TTY 7-1-1

Visit: [Vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use](https://vancouver.ca/reduce-single-use)

致電 3-1-1

致电 3-1-1

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ 3-1-1

Hoi Chi Tiết 3-1-1

Obtenga Información 3-1-1

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This guide is intended to help businesses, charities and not-for-profits comply with the by-laws for single-use items, and includes simplified language. This guide is not a by-law. If a compliance or enforcement issue arises, the by-law wording governs.

