

What are Alternatives to Single Use Plastic Grocery Bags?

Instead of using a plastic grocery bag, you can:

Use canvas, cloth or a durable plastic bag made for multiple use.

Reusable bags are more environmentally friendly than paper or plastic. Under the law, any store required to recycle plastic bags must also sell reusable bags. Keep them in your car for the next time you have to run out for groceries.

Say "No thank you."

Not all items require a bag so tell the clerk, "No thank you." Carry small purchase items like a magazine, one piece of candy, or drink to the car instead of in a plastic bag.

Reuse them.

There are many great uses for plastic carry-out bags such as trash can liners in the home, for doggie waste or to use again at a retail store. Get creative and find new ways to reuse those bags.

Tell a friend.

Get others to recycle and use reusable bags. Let them know where they can find them or turn them on to recycling opportunities at their nearest retail store.

What do I do with a bag if it says it is compostable, and not recyclable?

You can check with your local recycling coordinator to see if you have a composting program it can be sent to. Composting the bag in your backyard compost pile is not recommended. Your pile will not reach temperatures need to break down the bag. It is recommended that compostable bags, where they can't be composted, be reused as garbage can liners or dog waste collection bags and then discarded in the trash.

What about Reusable Bags?

The store needs to make reusable bags available for purchase and allow customers to use reusable bags in lieu of plastic or paper bags.

If I bring my bags back for recycling, does that mean I am getting used bags at the check out?
NO! All the bags collected in this program will be sent to a recycling facility to be manufactured into a new product like composite lumber or new bags.

Write or call us:

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Solid & Hazardous Materials
Bureau of Waste Reduction & Recycling
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233-7253
(518) 402-8704

or email us at:

dshmwrr@gw.dec.state.ny.us

or visit our website:

www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/294.html



New York State Department of
Environmental Conservation

New York State's Consumer's Information Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Act



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New York State's Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Act

What is the Law?

It is a new statewide law that requires certain retail and grocery stores to set up a recycling program for customers to return plastic bags for recycling. The law went into effect on January 1, 2009

What are Plastic Grocery Bags Made From?

Plastic grocery bags are usually made from two types of plastic:

High-density polyethylene film - (HDPE)
Low density or linear-low density polyethylene film - (LDPE)

Once the bags are recycled, they are made into composite lumber, trash can liners or plastic bags.

Where do I recycle plastic bags?

Consumers will be able to recycle plastic carryout bags at certain retail stores and most grocery stores. Stores must make collection bins for plastic bag recycling available to customers in a visible, easily accessible location.

If plastic bag collection containers are not available in a regulated store, please email dshmwrr@gw.dec.state.ny.us or call (518) 402-8705. We will need the store name and location.

What are Acceptable Plastic Bags for Recycling?

The law requires that stores collect plastic carryout bags. In addition to those bags, most programs will accept:

Note: All materials must be clean and dry

Plastic grocery bags.
Plastic retail bags with string ties and rigid plastic handles removed.
Plastic newspaper bags.
Plastic dry-cleaning bags.
Plastic produce, bread, cereal and frozen food bags with ALL food residue removed.
Plastic wrap from paper products (paper towels, etc).
Plastic salt bags with rigid plastic handles removed.
Plastic stretch/shrink wrap with all food residue removed.
Plastic zipper type bags WITHOUT rigid plastic closing mechanism.

What are UNACCEPTABLE Plastics Bags?

Plastic bags with strings or rigid plastic handles.
Plastic bags with food residue.
Plastic soil or mulch bags.
Plastic zipper type bags with rigid plastic closing mechanism.
Plastic bubble wrap.
Plastic food containers .
Plastic bottles (should be recycled in your curbside or drop-off program).

Why Recycle Plastic Carryout Bags?

By recycling plastic bags, you can provide valuable materials to manufacturers of plastic lumber, plastic bags and other useful products. Using bags as feedstock, in place of virgin plastics, reduces our demand for oil.

In addition, recycling bag help reduce waste and litter which means cleaner streets and waterways, and less materials in the landfill.

Plastic bags can also be dangerous to animals that ingest them or are strangled by them.

All the bags collected in this program will be sent to a recycling facility to be manufactured into a new product like composite lumber or new bags.

