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# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the purpose of the Better Bag Bill?

To protect the environment, including human health and animal and marine life, by reducing single-use waste and bringing awareness of the benefits of reusables to shoppers. By restricting the distribution of plastic bags and mandating retailers charge a minimum of 10 cents for paper or reusable bags, we reduce plastic litter and contamination in waterways.

## Which businesses are affected?

All retail stores, restaurants, grocery stores, or any other establishment that provides single-use plastic bags to its customers as a result of the sale of a product or service, whether for-profit or not-for-profit.

## When does the legislation go into effect?

Beginning January 1, 2024, retailers can no longer provide customers with plastic bags.

An inspector shall not issue a citation with a monetary penalty for the **first 90 days** after the provisions take effect; however, during this period, an inspector may issue a correction notice and shall attempt to educate any non-compliant retail establishment on the requirements of legislation CB-32-2023.

## Why is a minimum 10-cent fee imposed for paper and reusable bags?

The charge for retailer-provided paper and reusable bags incentivizes customers to bring their own and reduces the demand for single-use items. The retailer retains the fee in full to help offset the costs associated with the purchase and the option of providing paper bags and reusable bags.

Each bag purchased amount charged from the retailer will be itemized on the customer's receipt, just as all other merchandise purchased. Establishments must post notice of bag charge at public entrances or at each point of sale.

## What is considered a reusable bag?

A reusable carryout bag is defined as a bag with stitched handles specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuses and is made of (1) cloth or other washable fabric, or (2) a durable material suitable for multiple re-use that is not made of plastic.

## Are there any exceptions?

Establishments shall not impose a fee on customers for paper bags used to:

- Contain pharmacy prescriptions.
- Package prepared foods provided at the drive-through window.
- Provided by a full-service restaurant after a meal for leftovers.

Additionally, the prohibition of plastic bags does not apply to plastic bags used to:

- Package bulk items, including fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, candy, or small hardware items.
- Wrap frozen foods, meat, or fish, whether prepackaged or not.
- Wrap flowers, potted plants, or other damp items.
- Contain unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods.
- Protect or contain garments or dry-cleaned clothes; protect suits, dresses, and formal wear.
- Take live fish, insects, mollusks, or crustaceans away from the retail store.

## Is the County going to provide reusable bags to residents?

The County will distribute a limited supply of free reusable bags to residents during special events on a first-come, first-served basis. Additionally, businesses may choose to distribute reusable bags at their establishments.

## Is this a tax?

No. The minimum ten cents charged for paper or reusable bags is charged by and paid directly to the retailer to help offset their cost of purchasing and providing reusable and paper bags. The government does not receive any of the money from the bag fee.

## Do I have to use a bag for my purchases?

To avoid a fee, shoppers are encouraged to bring their reusable bags while shopping. Some stores may provide cardboard boxes that shoppers may use to package their items, or a person may bring their own box. Cardboard can be used multiple times and should be flattened before recycling in our curbside collections.