



# Plan Ahead for New Single-Use Plastics Guidelines

## BEGINNING JANUARY 1, 2020

Operations throughout Charleston will be required to eliminate use of single-use plastic carryout and merchandise bags, as well as certain plastic carryout and food packaging items.

These new measures will mean cleaner city streets and ocean waters, but we know they also will mean big changes for you and your customers.

Use this guide to learn more about alternatives that will work for your organization.

## WHO NEEDS TO GET READY?

The new guidelines apply to all commercial and nonprofit operations including:

- Concession/event vendors and food trucks
- Farmers markets/stands and takeout stands
- Schools and government
- Grocery and liquor stores
- Restaurants and bars
- Retail stores

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## What's IN?

Establishments will be able to choose from numerous affordable alternatives and certain specialty items will still be allowed.

### ✓ Reusable Bags and Recyclable Paper Bags

#### ✓ REUSABLE BAGS

- Cloth or other washable fabric or plastic bags at least 4 mils thick
- A minimum lifetime of 125 uses
- With handles and clear display of information on reuse/recycling



#### ✓ RECYCLABLE PAPER BAGS

- Paper bags of all sizes
- With and without handles
- Including glossy gift bags with handles



### ✓ Recyclable or Compostable Disposable Food Containers and Service Ware

Food service ware, containers and packaging made out of materials that are compostable<sup>1</sup> or are accepted by the Charleston County recycling program<sup>2</sup> including:

- ✓ Aluminum
- ✓ Cardboard
- ✓ Glass
- ✓ Paper
- ✓ Recyclable plastics



## What's OUT?

**AFTER JANUARY 1, 2020**, operations will be required to stop using:

### ✗ Plastic Single-Use Carryout Bags

- ✗ Intended for one-time use to **transport purchases**
- ✗ Less than 4 mils thick
- ✗ Not included in the "Exceptions: Specialty Items" section (back page)



### ✗ Non-Recyclable and Non-Compostable Disposable Food Containers and Service Ware

Polystyrene (also known as plastic foam or Styrofoam™) and other non-recyclable and non-compostable food service ware, carryout containers and food packaging materials including:

- ✗ Bowls
- ✗ Boxes
- ✗ Clamshells
- ✗ Cups
- ✗ Plates
- ✗ Stirrers
- ✗ Straws



(See "Exceptions: Specialty Items" section on back)

### ✗ Operations also will be required to stop selling or renting polystyrene:

- ✗ Bowls, cups and plates
- ✗ Coolers, containers and ice chests
- ✗ Shipping boxes and packing material

## EXCEPTIONS: Specialty Items

The following specialty items are not restricted or are exempt from restrictions:

- Bags for bulk grocery items
- Bags for raw, frozen or prepared foods
- Bread bags
- Condiment packages
- Cutlery
- Deli bags
- Dry cleaning/garment bags
- Egg cartons
- Floral/plant wrapping
- Garbage bags
- Meat trays
- Newspaper bags
- Pet waste bags
- Plastic drink or soup container lids
- Produce bags
- Straws for use by customers with disabilities



## WHY are we doing this?

These new measures are about cleaner streets and waterways, preserving the beauty and livability of Charleston for generations to come.

Plastic bags and containers are convenient, but they also-

- **Trash our neighborhoods and waterways.** More than 302 million tons of plastics are discarded worldwide each year.<sup>3</sup> Plastic waste ends up on Charleston's streets and 7.6 tons are in Charleston Harbor alone.<sup>4</sup>
- **Threaten wildlife health.** As many as 100,000 marine animals have been injured or killed by entanglement with or ingestion of plastic waste.<sup>5</sup>
- **Pose risks to human health.** Plastics never fully biodegrade, but when pieces of these bags and containers are eaten by animals, the plastic enters our food chain.

## WHERE can I learn more?

Detailed information is available online at [www.charleston-sc.gov/plastic](http://www.charleston-sc.gov/plastic)

For specific questions:

City of Charleston: call (843) 724-7311 or email [citizenservices@charleston-sc.gov](mailto:citizenservices@charleston-sc.gov)

Town of James Island: call (843) 795-4141 or email [info@jamesislandsc.us](mailto:info@jamesislandsc.us)

Charleston County: call (843) 720-7111 or email [recycle@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:recycle@charlestoncounty.org)

## NOTES & REFERENCES:

<sup>1</sup>Use of compostable products must be combined with an active composting program to be considered acceptable. Visit the Charleston County website – [www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/environmental-management/compost-program.php](http://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/environmental-management/compost-program.php) – for more information on materials accepted for composting and compost haulers.

<sup>2</sup>For more information about materials accepted for recycling in Charleston County, please visit [www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/environmental-management/recycle-what.php](http://www.charlestoncounty.org/departments/environmental-management/recycle-what.php).

If you have specific questions about a product not listed on their website please contact the Charleston County Recycling Center at (843) 720-7111 or [recycle@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:recycle@charlestoncounty.org).

<sup>3</sup><https://ourworldindata.org/plastic-pollution#empirical-view>

<sup>4</sup>[www.citadel.edu/root/change-leading-research-directed-by-dr-john-weinstein](http://www.citadel.edu/root/change-leading-research-directed-by-dr-john-weinstein)

<sup>5</sup>[www.iflscience.com/environment/ocean-animals-%E2%80%99death-plastic%E2%80%99-could-be-occurring-more-frequently/](http://www.iflscience.com/environment/ocean-animals-%E2%80%99death-plastic%E2%80%99-could-be-occurring-more-frequently/)

This guide is for explanation purposes only and is by no means meant to be a substitution for the official City of Charleston Code, Town of James Island Code and Charleston County Code of Ordinances.



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