



# CITY OF FRAMINGHAM

## PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION ORDINANCE

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### PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION ORDINANCE FAQ FOR RESIDENTS & CUSTOMERS

- **Is the Plastic Bag Reduction Bylaw now an ordinance?**
  - Yes, Framingham's bylaws were converted to Ordinances on January 5, 2021 by the City Council. However, the conversion of the former Bylaw to the Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance has no material impact on its provisions. To view the most recent version of the Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance and recent amendments, please visit: [www.framinghamma.gov/PlasticBagReductionOrdinance](http://www.framinghamma.gov/PlasticBagReductionOrdinance).
- **Why did the City amend the original Plastic Bag Reduction Ordinance?**
  - The Plastic Bag Reduction Bylaw was enacted by Framingham Town Meeting in 2017. While the Bylaw was successful in the elimination of thin-film single-use checkout bags under 2.5 mil in thickness, concerns were expressed in 2019 that some retailers had switched to thicker plastic bags that went contrary to the intent of the Bylaw.
  - An Environmental Task Force (ETF) was created to explore how to address challenges of the existing Bylaw. After concluding its research and business outreach efforts, the ETF proposed the current amendments to the (now) Ordinance to address these issues and better encourage customers in Framingham to utilize reusable checkout bags. The proposed changes were approved by the Framingham City Council in November 2019.
  - Then in December 2020, the effective date of the amended Ordinance was delayed from January 1, 2021 to July 5, 2021.
- **When does the amended Ordinance go into effect?**
  - The Ordinance is currently scheduled to become effective on July 5, 2021.
- **How should I get ready for when the amendments go into effect on July 5, 2021?**
  - Keep reusable bags in your vehicle so that you always have them available.
  - Use a reminder, note or sticker on your dashboard to make sure you bring your reusable bags with you on the way to the store.
  - Designate different bags for different types of grocery items (produce, meats, frozen goods) and dry good items.
- **What type of reusable bags are recommended?**
  - Reusable bags that are durable, made from recycled materials, and can be machine- or hand-washed are recommended. Many people have such bags at home such as canvas tote bags, sturdy plastic bags with stitched handles, etc.



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- Reusable bags provided by stores beginning on July 5, 2021 must comply with the definition of a reusable checkout bag in the amended Ordinance. Bags that comply with this definition will be suitable for many reuses and present a great alternative to using recyclable paper bags.
- **How can I keep my reusable bags clean?**
  - Wash bags frequently, following care instructions. Fabric bags can typically be machine washable while reusable polypropylene bags can be washed by hand with warm, soapy water. Dry bags before storing them.
  - Wipe insulated bags with a disinfecting or sanitizing cloth, especially along the seams.
  - Use separate bags for raw meats, seafood and produce. Label bags to avoid confusion.
  - Keep bags for non-food items like cleaners, books, gear, etc. separate from food bags.
- **Can I still use the thin plastic bags used for storing produce, meat, or wet items at the grocery store?**
  - Yes, single-use plastic bags, typically without handles, that are made to contain dry cleaning, newspapers, produce, meat, bulk foods, wet items, and other similar merchandise are still permissible
- **Why was a fee implemented for checkout bags?**
  - In recognition that all alternatives to plastic single-use checkout bags bear their own environmental costs and challenges, a minimum checkout bag fee was implemented to encourage the reuse of checkout bags.
- **Who receives the fee collected from the sale of checkout bags?**
  - Stores will keep all the fees that they collect pursuant to this Ordinance.
- **What fee are affected establishments required to charge for checkout bags? Does the fee apply to all checkout bags?**
  - Establishments are required to charge a minimum fee of \$0.10 cent per reusable checkout bag or recyclable paper bag to customers at checkout. As these are the only two types of checkout bags that may be provided to customers at checkout, the minimum fee should apply to all checkout bags offered at checkout beginning July 5, 2021.



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- **What establishments will this affect?**
  - The amended Ordinance will impact any retail establishment, person, corporation, partnership, business venture, or vendor that sells or provides merchandise, goods or materials directly to a customer, whether for or not for profit, including but not limited to pharmacies, convenience and grocery stores, liquor stores, seasonal and temporary businesses, farmers markets, public markets, jewelry stores, and household goods stores.
  - The amended Ordinance will not impact restaurants, or bazaars, fairs or festivals operated by nonprofit organizations or religious institutions.
- **Who do I contact if I still have questions?**
  - If you are unsure whether the Ordinance applies to your business, please contact [bagordinance@framinghamma.gov](mailto:bagordinance@framinghamma.gov).