

CITY OF ASBURY PARK
ONE MUNICIPAL PLAZA
ASBURY PARK, NEW JERSEY 07712

PHONE: (732) 775-2100
WWW.CITYOFASBURY PARK.COM



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AMY QUINN, DEPUTY MAYOR
EILEEN CHAPMAN, COUNCILPERSON
YVONNE CLAYTON, COUNCILPERSON
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DONNA M. VIEIRO, INTERIM CITY MANAGER
CINDY A. DYE, RMC, CITY CLERK

CITY COUNCIL BAN ON SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS NOW IN EFFECT
Ban Will Help Eliminate Litter and Keep Plastic Bags from Ending Up in Lakes and Ocean

1/2/20, Asbury Park, NJ – To help eliminate litter and keep them from ending up in our lakes, oceans and sewer system, City Council has voted to ban single-use plastic bags. Asbury Park’s Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban began January 1, 2020.

Single-use plastic bags cannot be provided by retailers or food establishments at customer check-out. Instead, businesses may provide single-use paper bags or reusable bags at a minimum fee of \$0.10 to the customer (maximum \$0.25 on paper, no maximum on reusable bags), or customers may bring their own reusable bag. Exceptions include supermarket bags without handles for produce and meat to prevent cross-contamination; prescription drug bags; hardware store bags for screws and bolts; laundry and dry-cleaning bags; newspaper delivery bags; and plastic bags used by recipients of public assistance programs.

“We continue to create policies and regulations that promote environmental stewardship and hope this small change in Asbury Park will create a big impact for future generations,” said Mayor John Moor, “Other municipalities who have passed plastic bag bans have seen a dramatic increase in reusable bag use and a decrease in plastic bags found in storm drains and clogging up recycling operations. We look forward to seeing those same results in Asbury Park.”

“Our ultimate goal is to keep Asbury Park’s beaches, ocean and lakes free of pollution,” said Deputy Mayor Amy Quinn, “Plastic is the most common type of marine litter worldwide and it doesn’t biodegrade. Instead, it ends up breaking up into small particles that stay in the water and enter our food chain. As a beachside community, it’s our responsibility to protect our environment and create a sustainable future for Asbury Park.”

For more information, visit www.cityofasburypark.com/plasticbagban or see the Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban Ordinance (No. 2019-23) in the City Code section of www.cityofasburypark.com.

For business owners looking to help keep costs down by partnering with other businesses on bulk paper or reusable bag purchases, contact 732-502-5724.

For additional questions on the Plastic Bag ban, contact City Manager Donna M. Vieiro at 732-502-5755 or donna.vieiro@cityofasburypark.com.

City of Asbury Park Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What is a single-use plastic bag?** Any plastic bag that is under 2.25mil in thickness. (For example, the kind of plastic bag you get at the supermarket)
- 2. What types of bags are banned? Are there any bags that are exempt from the ban?** All single-use plastic bags are banned. Some exceptions apply including: plastic bags without handles for meats, vegetables and dry goods to prevent cross-contamination; plastic bags that are used for prescriptions; plastic bags for newspapers; laundry and dry cleaning bags; small plastic bags under 4" used for dispensing hardware from a hardware store; plastic bags to contain ice or frozen foods; and bags related to a purchase by an individual receiving public assistance.
- 3. Why do retailers have to charge a fee for a bag and who does the fee go to?** First and foremost, the purpose of a fee is to deter customers from using single-use bags in general, and to remind them to bring a reusable bag when they go shopping. Second, the fee is to help the retailer offset the cost of providing a more sustainable alternative to plastic, which may cost more for the retailer. The full fee goes to the retailer to offset those costs.
- 4. As a retailer, do I have to charge tax on paper and reusable bags?** Yes, according to the NJ Division of Taxation retailers must charge a tax on both paper bags and reusable bags as they are tangible goods for sale.
- 5. What if I have a lot of plastic bags left after January 1, 2020? What do I do with them?** For retailers that have a surplus of plastic bags when the ban begins, please discontinue providing them to customers. Instead, you may recycle them by bringing them to City Hall at 1 Municipal Plaza. Call 732-502-5724 for details.
- 6. What if I don't want to stop giving out plastic bags?** You may only provide plastic bags if they are reusable plastic of more than 2.25mil thickness. Otherwise, you must discontinue use of all plastic bags, or be liable for a fine of up to \$1,000.00.
- 7. Can I give out "compostable plastic bags" or "biodegradable plastic bags"?** No. Unfortunately, studies have found that "biodegradable" plastic bags will only degrade in certain environments but they can remain in landfills for several years. We encourage you to use "compostable" bags if you have a composter or will be taking your compostable materials and food waste to a community compost bin (Kula Farms provides a series of compost bins along the back side of the old Turf Club on Atkins Ave-South of Springwood Ave. For more information email them: info@kulafarm.org or stop by the farm: 115 Atkins Avenue, across from Springwood Park). Given that most people will not or cannot use these materials properly, we do not recommend using them, and recommend recycled paper bags instead.
- 8. What if I don't own a reusable bag or don't have enough money to pay for bags during my shopping/dining trip?** You may purchase a paper bag for a fee (minimum 10¢, maximum 25¢) or purchase a reusable shopping bag, if the retailer provides them (minimum 10¢, no maximum). In addition, there will be several reusable bag collection bins around the City where you can get a free

recycled reusable bag. You may also ask retailers if they have boxes available to carry your items home, but please remember to recycle them after use.

9. **Are all retailers going to charge for bags and discontinue plastic bags?** Yes. All retailers and food establishments in the City of Asbury Park must discontinue use of plastic bags and charge a fee for paper or reusable bags. To report plastic bag use by a retailer in Asbury Park after January 1, 2020, call 732-502-5724.

10. **What if I receive special assistance and can't afford a bag?** If you receive public assistance such as the New Jersey State Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, the EBT Program, or the New Jersey State Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for women, infants and children (as full or partial payment, fixed income or disability), you are exempt from the plastic bag ban.