



SINGLE-USE PLASTIC RESTRICTIONS FOR CAFES & RESTAURANTS IN CANADA

Guide for Navigating Single-Use Plastic Laws at the
Federal, Provincial, and Municipal Level

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Canada

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SINGLE-USE PLASTIC REGULATIONS HAVE CHANGED IS YOUR BUSINESS PREPARED?

In an effort to combat pollution and achieve zero plastic waste by 2030, the government of Canada has recently passed new Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations for businesses across the country. The impact on the food service industry will be felt from coast to coast, particularly in cities that had no previous single-use plastics restrictions in place.

In this guide, you will find a simple breakdown of these new rules, as well as any specific provincial or municipal guidelines impacting your area. This comprehensive, easy-to-follow document covers:

- ✔ Banned Single-Use Plastic Materials
- ✔ Potential Penalties & Fines
- ✔ Point-of-Sale Restrictions
- ✔ Key Dates and Deadlines
- ✔ Upcoming Changes
- ✔ Single-Use Plastic Alternatives

If you have any questions about these changes and what they mean for your business, please don't hesitate to contact us at 305-572-0077 or <https://www.sofiproducts.com>



UNDERSTANDING THE NEW FEDERAL LAW

Effective nationwide from December 20, 2023, the new federal Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations limit the types of single-use plastics that can be used for checkout bags, cutlery, food containers, ring carriers, stir sticks, and straws.

Food service businesses that provide products made from restricted materials are subject to fines starting from \$400 to \$2,000 for the initial violation and \$500 to \$4000 for each subsequent violation.



CHECKOUT BAGS

Checkout or takeaway bags made wholly or partially from the following materials are no longer permitted across Canada.

- ✔ Polyethylene (PE)
- ✔ Polystyrene (PS)
- ✔ Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)
- ✔ Oxo-degradable plastics
- ✔ Carbon black plastics



PLASTIC CUTLERY & UTENSILS

Disposable/single-use plastic cutlery that cannot be run through a dishwasher 100+ times without losing its physical shape is no longer permitted. This includes knives, forks, spoons, sporks, and chopsticks made from the following materials:

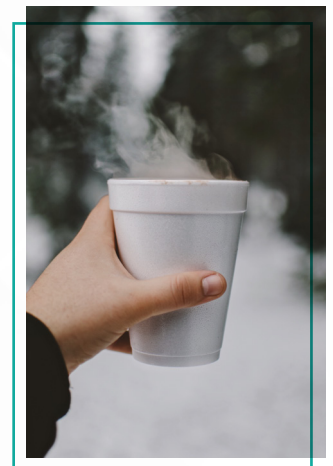
- ✔ Polystyrene (PS) (common in 'standard' take-out utensils).
- ✔ Polyethylene (PE)
- ✔ Polypropylene (PP) (used for heat-resistant, flexible spoons and forks)
- ✔ Polycarbonate (PC)
- ✔ Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC)
- ✔ Oxo-degradable plastics
- ✔ Carbon black plastics



FOODSERVICE WARES

Foodservice wares, which cover everything from takeaway containers and boxes to cups, bowls, and plates, can no longer be made wholly or partially from certain types of plastics and non-biodegradable

- ✔ Polystyrene foam (aka Styrofoam)
- ✔ Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) (common in clamshell containers and plastic wrap)
- ✔ Carbon black plastics
- ✔ Oxo-degradable plastics



PLASTIC RING CARRIERS

Ring carriers, often used to hold 4, 6, or 8 packs of beverage cans, are common throughout the food service industry; they can no longer be used if made from single-use plastic or plastic film, as these materials are non-biodegradable and difficult to recycle. Ring carriers made from cardboard or other recyclable alternatives are still permitted.



PLASTIC STIR STICKS

Stir sticks that have been wholly or partially manufactured from plastic, such as the ones commonly provided with coffee orders, are no longer permitted. Under the new restrictions, reusable or recyclable stir sticks are allowed.

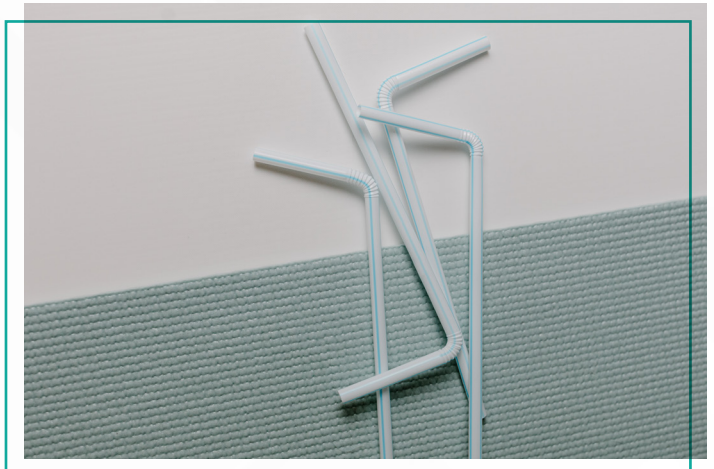


PLASTIC STRAWS

Plastic straws, including standard straws, flexible straws with corrugated sections, and disposable straws packaged alongside juice boxes and other beverage containers, can no longer be made from Polystyrene (PS) or Polyethylene (PE) materials.

Reusable straws are allowed provided that they are not made with the above materials and are durable enough to withstand 100+ washes in a standard household dishwasher.

Looking for more info on these new rules and restrictions? View the complete [Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations](#) here.



PROVINCE-BY-PROVINCE GUIDELINES

On top of the federal restrictions, which remain applicable in all provinces and territories, there are several provincial, municipal, and/or regional guidelines that businesses need to be aware of.

EDMONTON

Here are the key differences between the federal law and [Edmonton's Single-Use Plastics ban](#).

- ✔ Plastic Shopping Bags can no longer be made from Biodegradable and Compostable Plastics (PLA, PHA) recycled, conventional plastics, or bio-plastics.
- ✔ Single-use Cups are permitted for takeout orders, but beverages consumed on-premise must be served in a reusable container.
 - ⦿ Food service businesses affiliated with a charitable organisation are exempt from this rule.
- ✔ Accessories (including utensils, condiment packets, napkins, chopsticks, and straws) can only be provided upon the customer's request.
 - ⦿ A customer request can be initiated by the customer at the point-of-sale or by answering a prompt on an online order form.
 - ⦿ Businesses can provide foodware accessory stations where customers can select their own utensils and accessories
 - ⦿ Businesses are allowed to ask the customer if they would like accessories, but they cannot 'bundle' items with food orders.

RECYCLABLE & REUSABLE SHOPPING BAG FEES

\$0.15
Per paper
shopping bag
until July 1,
2024

\$0.25
Per paper
shopping bag
after July 1,
2024

\$1.00
Per reusable
shopping
bag until
July 1, 2024

\$2.00
Per reusable
shopping bag
after July 1,
2024

The fine for violating the above guidelines is \$500 for the first and double for subsequent violations, on top of any fines incurred from violating the federal restrictions.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Effective in December 2023, British Columbia will roll out new provincial single-use plastic rules that exceed the scope of the federal Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations.

Here are a few of the key differences in B.C.'s single-use plastic law that food service business owners need to be aware of

✔ Plastic Shopping Bags, including oxo-degradable plastics, conventional plastics, compostable plastics, and biodegradable plastics, are completely prohibited.

RECYCLABLE & REUSABLE SHOPPING BAG FEES:



This charge can be waived if the recycled paper bag, reusable bag, or used bag is less than 15 cm by 20 cm when flat and used to provide food/beverages or personal hygiene products.

✔ Single-use Plastic Utensils, regardless of plastic type, are now banned. This covers knives, forks, spoons, sporks, and chopsticks.

✔ Foodservice Wares including clamshell containers, cups, plates, bowls, and cartons, can no longer be produced from the following materials.

- ⦿ Polystyrene foam (Styrofoam)
- ⦿ Polyvinyl Chloride (PVC) and Polyvinylidene Chloride (PVDC)
- ⦿ Biodegradable and compostable plastics like PLA, PHA, Agave, and Oyster shell.
- ⦿ Oxo-degradable plastics

✔ Foodservice Accessories including lids, sleeves, straws, a condiment, napkins, utensils, and wet wipes can no longer be distributed from any material.

This does not apply to:

- ⦿ A customer requests the foodservice accessory
- ⦿ The accessory is made available in a self-service manner
- ⦿ The accessory is a lid and is purchased for delivery or a drive-through window
- ⦿ The accessory is distributed or sold at a care facility for us by a person admitted to the care facility

| MONTREAL

Here are the key differences between the federal law and Montreal's ban.

✔ Plastic checkout Bags, including those made from oxo-degradable plastics, oxo-fragmentable plastics, oxo-biodegradable plastics, biodegradable plastics, and compostable plastics like PLA, PHA, Agave, and Oyster Shell are prohibited.

Exceptions include:

- ⌚ Bags transporting foods – such as fruits, vegetables, nuts, bulk treats, prepared foods, meat, fish, bread, and dairy products – to the checkout counter of a business
 - ⌚ Bags protecting food from direct contact with other items
 - ⌚ Reusable shopping bags
 - ⌚ Recyclable paper shopping bags
- ✔ Cups, stirring sticks, straws, utensils, plates, containers, lids, and trays made from hard-to-recycle Plastics, including Polystyrene No. 6 and compostable plastics like PLA and PHA, are banned for on-site usage.
- ⌚ Items used to store/transport raw meat and fish are exempt from this requirement
- ✔ Plastic Utensils cannot be included in takeout orders
- ✔ Non-profit food aid organizations, food businesses only offering home deliveries, externally pre-packaged foods, and plastic-coated cardboard cups and containers are exempt from these restrictions.

The fines for violating Montreal's new city by-laws are \$200 to \$1,000 for the first infraction and \$300 to \$2,000 for each subsequent infraction. The fines are greater for businesses than individuals. This is on top of any fines incurred from violating the federal or provincial restrictions.



ALBERTA

Though there is no province-wide single-use plastic ban in Alberta, several communities, including popular tourist destinations like Banff, have implemented their own by-laws requiring that customers request single-use disposable items. Calgary's proposed Single-Use Plastic by-law will be effective in 2024 and the City of Edmonton has its own Single-use Plastics Prohibition Law already in place.

MANITOBA

Manitoba has not implemented any province-wide bans on single-use plastics, but some municipalities, including Winnipeg, have their own pre-existing bans in place. Check with your local government to see if you are required to charge for bags, straws, and other single-use, reusable, or recyclable items.

NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia has implemented a provincial ban on single-use plastic bags. Other single-use plastic items like straws, cutlery, and Styrofoam food containers are covered by the federal law.

ONTARIO

Ontario has not implemented any province-wide bans on single-use plastics, but some municipalities, including Toronto, have their own pre-existing single-use plastic reduction strategies in place. Check with your local government to see if you are required to charge for bags, straws, and other single-use, reusable, or recyclable items.

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Prince Edward Island has implemented a ban on single-use plastic bags. Other single-use plastic items like straws, cutlery, and Styrofoam food containers are covered by the federal law.

OTHER PROVINCES

For business owners in SK, NB, and NL, there are no additional laws restricting single-use plastics - the federal law outlined earlier in this document clarifies what you can and cannot do.

TERRITORIES (YK, NT, AND NU)

In addition to the federal single-use plastics ban, the Yukon government recently passed a law restricting the usage of single-use paper bags. Nunavut and the Northwest Territories had pre-existing single-use plastic bag restrictions in place before 2023 - consult your local officials for clarification on the impacts of the newer law.

WHY ARE COMPOSTABLE AND BIODEGRADABLE PLASTIC BANNED?

One of the most confusing aspects of the single-use plastic ban, particularly for business owners in areas with additional provincial or municipal restrictions, is why products marked as biodegradable or compostable are included.

At first glance, this can seem like a glaring oversight that runs counterproductive to the country's Zero Plastic Waste 2030 initiative. The reality of these compostable and biodegradable plastic products, however, is that they are more focused on a marketing spin than sustainability.

These materials might technically be compostable or biodegradable, but **only** when processed at one of just 328 specialized industrial composting facilities in the country. Otherwise, **these products are the same as plastic.**



1. FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE NEW FEDERAL REGULATIONS

The first step to compliance is learning about the different types of single-use plastics that are now prohibited. For businesses in municipalities with pre-existing bans, this is a continuation and expansion of what you've already been dealing with, but for others, some of the banned items may come as a shock.

2. DETERMINE IF YOU ARE SUBJECT TO ANY ADDITIONAL REGULATIONS

For businesses in British Columbia, Edmonton, and Montreal, there are additional requirements in the new provincial/municipal 2023 single-use plastic restrictions. Some provinces (NS, PEI, QC) as well as major cities like Toronto and Winnipeg, have pre-existing municipal regulations for single-use plastics, though these are mostly superseded by the new federal law.

3. AUDIT & EVALUATE YOUR EXISTING OPERATIONS

For decades, single-use plastic items played a major role in the Canadian food service industry - the first step to transitioning to a more viable long-term solution is understanding how your business was using these items pre-2023.

4. TRANSITION TO A LONG-TERM, BAN-PROOF ALTERNATIVE

Getting rid of single-use plastics does not mean withholding utensils, trays, cups, and bags from your valued customers - instead, savvy business owners should be looking for sustainable, eco-friendly alternatives that are positioned to remain compliant even as further single-use plastic restrictions are put in place.

5. MONITOR CHANGES TO FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL, AND MUNICIPAL LAWS

Waste reduction policies are only trending in one direction. When the city of Vancouver implemented its ban on single-use plastics, shopping bags, and Styrofoam containers in 2020 it was an outlier; today, similar bans exist at the provincial and federal level, impacting food service providers nationwide.



The earlier that food service businesses adapt to this new industry reality the better prepared they will be for future updates.

These changes to Canada's regulation of single-use plastics were not created in a vacuum - they exist as part of the country's ongoing efforts to reduce plastic waste to zero by 2030. Getting compliant early and staying ahead of the curve will be more profitable than incurring fines and perpetually playing catch-up.

CONCLUSION

Ready to put your business on the fast track to regulatory compliance?

At SOFi, we develop solutions that work for the environment without compromising the customer experience. Discover what our line of 100% plastic-free paper straws, paper cups, and food service accessories can do for your business and customers..

Visit us at <https://www.sofiproducts.com/> to learn more.



<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/reduce-plastic-waste/single-use-plastic-overview.html>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/managing-reducing-waste/reduce-plastic-waste/single-use-plastic-technical-guidance.html#toc1>

<https://www.gazette.gc.ca/rp-pr/p2/2022/2022-06-22/html/sor-dors138-eng.html>

<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/regulations/SOR-2022-138/>

<https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/news/2022/12/change-is-here-canadas-ban-on-certain-harmful-single-use-plastics-starts-to-take-effect-this-month.html>

<https://yukon.ca/en/news/single-use-paper-bags-will-be-banned-yukon-starting-january-1-2023>

<https://banff.ca/1273/Single-Use-Items-Reduction-Strategy>

https://www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/oic/oic_cur/0461_2023

<https://montreal.ca/en/reglements-municipaux/recherche/615766882f8ac90011ca5888>

https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/garbage_waste/single-use-items

<https://vancouver.ca/green-vancouver/single-use-items.aspx>

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2023ENV0046-001143>

<https://calgary.ctvnews.ca/city-council-discusses-by-law-aimed-at-reducing-single-use-plastic-items-1.6234402>

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/environment-energy-and-climate-action/plastic-bag-reduction>

<https://www.toronto.ca/services-payments/recycling-organics-garbage/long-term-waste-strategy/reducing-single-use-takeaway-items/>

<https://novascotia.ca/single-use-plastic-bag-ban/>

The image features a solid teal background. A series of thin, white, wavy lines originate from a point at the top center and fan out downwards, creating a sense of movement and depth. The text 'SO Fi' is centered in the middle of the image in a white, sans-serif font. The 'S' and 'O' are in all caps, while the 'F' and 'i' are in title case.

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