

Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw: FAQs

Here are some answers to common questions about the Town of View Royal's Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw No. 1087, 2022:



1. Why is reducing the number of single-use checkout bags important?

- Plastic bags are a common, single-use item which contribute to landfill garbage, litter on our streets, damage to infrastructure, pollution in waterways and the ocean, and contamination of other recycling streams such as paper and kitchen scraps.
- Paper bags also have an environmental impact, primarily in the manufacturing process. For this reason, the bylaw also seeks to reduce the switch from plastic to paper bags by requiring that a fee be charged for each single-use paper bag that is distributed by businesses.

2. Can't plastic bags be recycled?

- There is no household recycling of soft plastics such as checkout bags. Instead, bags can be taken to depots around the region and to several retail outlets to have these bags recycled responsibly. However, most plastic bags end up in the landfill after only one use. The order of sustainable waste management is to first reduce, then reuse, and finally to recycle.
- The CRD keeps [an up to date list of depots](#) that accept soft plastics for recycling.
- [Recycle BC](#) is also a good resource for finding out where to recycle specific materials.

3. Are biodegradable bags allowed?

No. Biodegradable bags contaminate existing recycling streams and don't adequately decompose in a landfill. In the bylaw, biodegradable plastic and compostable plastic bags are both defined as plastic bags.

4. Can residents continue to use their own plastic bags after the bylaw comes in effect on April 22, 2022?

The bylaw only regulates businesses, not customers. Residents can continue to reuse their existing plastic bags as long as they wish.

5. What businesses are covered by the bylaw?

All businesses regulated under the Town's Business License and Regulation Bylaw are covered by the bylaw, including retail stores, grocery stores and restaurants. The provisions in the Checkout Bag Regulation Bylaw will only apply to those businesses that provide checkout bags to customers.

6. What if I forgot to bring my reusable bags to the business? Can I buy some there?

Under the bylaw, a business may sell a paper bag for a minimum fee of \$0.25 per paper bag and a reusable bag for a minimum fee of \$2.00 per reusable bag.

7. What exemptions are allowed?

The bylaw does not apply to small paper bags (one that is less than 15 cm x 20 cm) or bags used to:

- package loose bulk items such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains, or candy;
- package loose small hardware items such as nails and bolts;
- contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, poultry, or seafood, whether pre-packaged or not;
- wrap flowers or potted plants;
- protect prepared foods or bakery goods that are not pre-packaged;
- contain prescription drugs received from a pharmacy;
- transport live fish;
- protect linens, bedding, or other similar large items that cannot easily fit in a Reusable Bag;
- protect newspapers or other printed material intended to be left at the customer's residence or place of business; or
- protect clothes after professional laundering or dry cleaning.

8. Can businesses offer used bags to customers?

A business may provide a Checkout Bag free of charge if the bag has already been used by a customer as long as the bag meets the requirements of the bylaw for paper or reusable bags. Used plastic bags cannot be provided. The Town supports solutions such as bag drop program so that a business can continue to offer recycled bags to customers or credit customers for returning their bags to the store.

9. I reuse my plastic bags for garbage and for pet waste. Can I continue to do that?

Plastic garbage bags, including biodegradable and compostable ones, can still be purchased in packages of multiple bags at retail stores. In many circumstances, dry residential landfill garbage does not require a plastic bin bag but can be disposed directly into residential garbage containers. For those on the municipal residential garbage and household food waste collection program, the Town requires separation of kitchen scraps and recyclables from landfill waste. Pet waste bags are available in dispensers throughout the Town (these are biodegradable) or are sold in pet stores across the region.

10. What about other single-use plastics?

There are currently no plans by the Town to regulate the distribution of other single use items such as straws, plastic cutlery, and stir sticks. However, the federal government is moving ahead in this direction and some municipalities are taking action to reduce the use of these items. Residents can take their own actions to reduce their use of disposable items of all kinds as part of their own contribution to sustainability in our region. Suggestions for reducing plastic waste can be found here:

[Tips to Use Less Plastic](#)

11. What are some examples of reusable checkout bags?

There are many types of reusable checkout bags including:

- Cotton or recycled cotton
- Other natural fabrics (e.g. hemp, jute)
- Synthetic fabrics like nylon, polyester and polypropylene (non-woven and woven polypropylene)

The bylaw sees reusable checkout bags as being able to be used at least 100 times, being made primarily of cloth or other washable fabric, and as having handles.