

# Learn about the new rules for plastic bag usage in the City of Eugene

In an effort to promote reusable shopping bags and reduce litter, the City of Eugene will implement a ban on single-use plastic carryout bags in all retail establishments within city limits beginning **May 1, 2013**. ALL retail businesses (large and small) located within the Eugene city limits will be required to provide only recycled paper bags or reusable bags as carryout bags for customers per Ordinance No. 20498. Key elements of the ordinance include:

- Thick plastic bags—4 mils or greater—are considered reusable and may be provided with or without charge.
- Plastic bags provided at a time other than at the point of sale are allowed. These include plastic bags used for meat, produce, and bulk items. Plastic bags for hot, prepared restaurant and deli take-out foods are also allowed.
- Starting May 1, businesses must charge a minimum five-cent fee for paper bags at check out.
- Customers using vouchers under the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program have the opportunity to opt out of the paper bag fee by presenting their vouchers at the point of sale and asking for a free bag. However, this rule does NOT apply to any other type of assistance program—participants in programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, or food stamps) must pay for paper bags or bring their own reusable bag.
- A listing of locations that offer free or reduced price bags is posted and updated on the City website (see below).
- Here are a few useful tips to remember your bags:
  - ⇒ Always start your shopping list with “Bring Bags”
  - ⇒ Keep a collapsible bag in your purse, backpack, or briefcase
  - ⇒ Keep bags in your vehicle
- There are a few simple steps shoppers can follow to keep reusable bags clean and to keep themselves and their families safe from germs. Wash reusable grocery bags at least once per month:
  - ⇒ Cloth reusable bags should be washed in a washing machine using laundry detergent and dried in the dryer or air-dried.
  - ⇒ Plastic-lined reusable bags should be wiped using hot water and soap and air-dried.
  - ⇒ Check that both cloth and plastic-lined reusable bags are completely dry before storing them.
- Always put raw meats into a disposable plastic bag before putting them in a reusable bag. When using reusable bags, keep meats, fresh produce, and ready-to-eat foods separated from other food products. Additionally, consumers should clean any reusable bags used for carrying food before using for other purposes such as carrying books or gym clothes.
- More information is available on the City’s website, [www.eugene-or.gov/plasticbags](http://www.eugene-or.gov/plasticbags), or by calling 541-682-5652.

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**BRING YOUR BAG**

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