



Communities, Land
and Environment

Plastic Bag Reduction Act

Q&A

Bill No. 114, the ***Plastic Bag Reduction Act*** received Royal Assent on June 12, 2018 and **will come into force on July 1, 2019**. The intent of the Act is to reduce waste and environmental damage resulting from single-use checkout bags, by incenting the shift to reusable bags.

Common Questions & Answers...

Q: What is the purpose of the *Plastic Bag Reduction Act*?

A: The intention of the Plastic Bag Reduction Act is to reduce the waste and environmental damage resulting from single-use checkout bags.

Q: After July 1, 2019, will businesses still provide plastic bags?

A: After July 1, 2019 businesses will no longer be permitted to distribute plastic bags, although they will be allowed to use up any inventory of plastic bags.

Q: Does the Plastic Bag Reduction Act only apply to grocery stores?

A: The Act applies to all businesses that distribute checkout bags.

Q: What type of checkout bags will be available?

A: After July 1, 2019 businesses will be permitted to distribute paper bags and reusable bags.

Q: Is there a charge for the paper or reusable bags?

A: Yes. The Act requires businesses to charge a minimum of 15 cents for a larger paper bag and a minimum of \$1.00 for a reusable bag. Small paper bags have no charge.

Q: Why is there a minimum charge for paper and reusable bags?

A: The main goal of the legislation is to reduce single-use bags and encourage reusable bags, not simply to replace single-use plastic bags with single-use paper bags. Consumers are encouraged employ reusable bags where reasonably possible. The charge is intended to encourage higher quality reusable bags.

Q: Can I bring my own bags?

A: Yes. You can bring your own bags for reuse, as long as they are clean and in reasonably good condition.

Q: Are businesses allowed to give away free bags after July 1, 2019.

A: The Plastic Bag Reduction Act prohibits a business from giving out free bags after July 1, 2019.

Q: Are there any exemptions?

Y: Section 5 of the Plastic Bag Reduction Act provides for the following exemptions:

5. Exemptions (1) Section 4 does not apply to (a) small paper bags; (b) bags used to (i) package loose bulk items such as fruit, vegetables, nuts, grains or candy, (ii) package loose small hardware items such as nails and bolts, (iii) contain or wrap frozen foods, meat, poultry or fish, whether pre-packaged or not, (iv) wrap flowers or potted plants, (v) protect prepared foods or bakery goods that are not pre-packaged, (vi) contain prescription drugs received from a pharmacy, (vii) transport live fish, (viii) protect linens, bedding or other similar large items that cannot easily fit in a reusable bag, (ix) protect newspapers or other printed material intended to be left at the customer's residence or place of business, (x) protect clothes after professional laundering or dry cleaning, (xi) package medical supplies and items used in the provision of health services; or (xii) protect tires that cannot easily fit in a reusable bag;

We welcome your questions and comments by email to jshughes@gov.pe.ca

In the event of a discrepancy between the information provided above and the Plastic Bag Reduction Act, the Act shall prevail.