RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION MARYLAND

Comprehensive Compliance Summary

Maryland Foodservice Packaging and Plastic Bans/Restrictions & Bag Fees

Policy/Effective Date Table by Jurisdiction

Comprehensive detail by jurisdiction is provided below this table; or click on jurisdiction name links in left column of table to jump to relevant section.

Compliance Information Compiled by RAM – Revised September 2026	**Polystyrene Foam Ban**	**Polystyrene Ban** (#6)$^{++}$ *(hard/rigid)*	**Plastic Bag Ban**	**Bag Fee**	**Straw/Stirrer Restrictions**	**Disposable Foodware Restrictions**
Statewide Ban	7/1/2020					
Annapolis (Anne Arundel)	9/1/2019		1/22/2025	1/22/2025*		
Anne Arundel County	2/28/2020		1/1/2024	1/1/2024*		
Baltimore City	10/19/2019		10/1/2021	10/1/2021		
Baltimore County			11/1/2023	11/1/2023*		
Centreville (Queen Anne's)			1/1/2024	1/1/2024*		
Chestertown (Kent)			1/19/2012*			
Charles County					7/1/2020 Enforcement Begins 1/1/2021	
Easton (Talbot)			4/2/2023****	4/2/2023*		
City of Frederick (Frederick)			1/1/2024			

Compliance Information Compiled by RAM – Revised September 2026	**Polystyrene Foam Ban**	**Polystyrene Ban** (#6)[++] *(hard/rigid)*	**Plastic Bag Ban**	**Bag Fee**	**Straw/Stirrer Restrictions**	**Disposable Foodware Restrictions**
Howard County				10/1/2020** Retail plastic bag fee	1/1/2022, Enforcement begins 7/1/2022	1/1/2022, Enforcement begins 7/1/2022
Montgomery County	1/1/2016	1/1/2022	1/1/2026	1/1/2026*	5/1/2021 and 12/21/2021	1/1/2017
Rockville (Montgomery)	Same as Montgomery	Same as Montgomery			7/1/2019	
Garrett Park (Montgomery)	Same as Montgomery	Same as Montgomery			3/3/2019	
Takoma Park (Montgomery)	7/1/2015	7/1/2015			1/1/2020	
Prince George's County	7/1/2016		1/1/2024	1/1/2024***	7/1/2020, Enforcement fines begin 1/1/2021	6/1/2023
City of College Park (PG County)			9/1/2023	9/1/2023		
City of Laurel			1/1/2022	1/1/2024		
City of Salisbury (Wicomico)			7/1/2023	7/1/2023*		
Westminster (Carroll)			7/1/2020****			

**Restaurant/Foodservice carryout bags exempt*

***Applies only to plastic bags used by retail stores; does not apply to restaurants*

****Restaurants are not required to charge for bags at drive-throughs or for leftovers.*

*****Plastic bags for restaurant takeout/delivery exempt*

[++]*Hard or rigid polystyrene means non-foam forms of #6 polystyrene plastic resin used for items such as disposable cups/lids, plates, bowls, containers, etc.*

If you have questions about this compliance information, please contact RAM's government affairs staff: Melvin Thompson (443-539-2455, mthompson@marylandrestaurants.com) or Brendan Mahoney (443-752-2899, bmahoney@marylandrestaurants.com).

Statewide

Polystyrene Foam Ban - Effective 7/1/2020

As of 7/1/2020, foodservice businesses statewide (any business that sells or provides food or beverages for consumption on or off the premises) may not sell or provide food or beverages in polystyrene foam products (commonly known as Styrofoam). The ban also applies to schools and business or institutional cafeterias, including cafeterias operated by or on behalf of State or local governments.

The ban does not apply to food and beverages that have been packaged in polystyrene foam containers before a foodservice business receives them. The ban also does not apply to polystyrene foam used to package raw, uncooked, or butchered meat, fish, poultry or seafood.

This new law also prohibits a person (including retailers and distributors) from selling or offering for sale in the State polystyrene foam foodservice products. However, it does not prohibit a person from storing such polystyrene foodservice products for later distribution outside the State.

The law will be enforced by a unit of county government (typically the Department of Health or Environment in most cases). A foodservice business or person who violates the law is subject to a penalty not exceeding $250. However, the penalty may not be imposed unless the enforcement authority first issues a written notice of violation, and the violation is not corrected within 3 months of receipt of the written notice. This law does not affect the authority of local governments to enact standards that are at least as stringent as those established in State law.

A copy of the law can be found HERE. Additional compliance information can be found on the Maryland Department of Environment's website HERE.

Anne Arundel County

Polystyrene Foam Ban - Effective 2/28/2020
Plastic Bag Ban/Fee – Effective 1/1/2024

As of 2/28/2020, County foodservice businesses may not provide food/beverages in polystyrene foam foodservice products, regardless of where the food will be consumed. A foodservice business may not sell or offer for sale polystyrene foam foodservice products. Foodservice businesses include full-service restaurants, limited-service restaurants, fast food, cafes, delicatessens, coffee shops, supermarkets, grocery stores, commercial retailers with grocery departments or foodservice, vending trucks or carts, food trucks, business or institutional cafeterias (including those operated by or on behalf of County departments and agencies), and other businesses selling or providing food within the County for consumption on or off the premises.

The ban does not apply to food or beverages filled and sealed in polystyrene foam containers outside of the County prior to receipt by a foodservice business. The ban also does not apply to materials used to package raw, uncooked, or butchered meat, fish, poultry or seafood for off-premises consumption.

County Health Department inspectors will check for compliance during routine inspections. Violations are a Class E civil offense subject to a $50 fine for the first violation, $100 for a second violation and $500 for the third or any subsequent violations.

Additional information can be found HERE.

Plastic Bag Ban/Fee
Effective January 1, 2024, plastic carryout bags are banned in Anne Arundel County. Under the new law, businesses may offer customers paper or reusable carryout bags for a fee of at least 10 cents per bag. Establishments must indicate on customer receipt the number of paper carryout bags and total amount charged. **However, restaurants are exempted from the requirement to charge 10 cents for each paper bag provided.**

Warnings will be issued for a first violation. A second violation is subject to a Class C Civil Offence and a fine of $500. Each subsequent violation is subject to a fine of $1,000.

Additional compliance information can be found HERE. A copy of the passed legislation can be found HERE.

City of Annapolis

Polystyrene Foam Ban - Effective 9/1/2019
Plastic Bag Ban/Fee – Effective 1/22/2025

As of 9/1/2019, foodservice businesses within the City of Annapolis may not sell or provide food/beverages in polystyrene foam foodservice products, regardless of where the food will be consumed. Foodservice businesses include full-service restaurants, limited-service restaurants, fast food, cafes, delicatessens, coffee shops, supermarkets, grocery stores, commercial retailers with grocery departments or foodservice, vending trucks or carts, food trucks, business or institutional cafeterias (including those operated by or on behalf of City departments and agencies), and other businesses selling or providing food within the City for consumption on or off the premises.

The ban does not apply to food or beverages filled and sealed in polystyrene foam containers outside of the City prior to receipt by a foodservice business. The ban also does not apply to polystyrene foam used to package raw, uncooked, or butchered meat, fish, poultry or seafood for off-premises consumption.

County Health Department inspectors will check for compliance during routine inspections and will report any violations to the City for enforcement. City fines are $100 for any single, initial violation, and an additional fine of $200 for each repeat or continuing violation (each day a violation exists is a separate offense).

More information is available on the City's website HERE.

Plastic Bag Ban/Fee
Effective January 22, 2025, plastic carryout bags will be prohibited in the City of Annapolis.

Under the new law, businesses may offer paper or reusable carryout bags for a fee of at least 10 cents per bag. The total number of bags provided, and the associated fee must be itemized on customer receipts. **Restaurants are exempt from the requirement to charge 10 cents per paper or reusable bag.**

A first violation will result in a $500 fine, with each subsequent violation subject to a $1,000 fine.

For more details about compliance, click HERE. To review the full text of the legislation, click HERE. *(see attachment 12. O-5-24 Signed (b&w) on the link page)*

Baltimore City

Polystyrene Foam Ban - Effective 10/19/2019
Plastic Bag Ban & Alternative Bag Fee - Effective 10/1/2021

Polystyrene Foam Ban
As of 10/19/2019, City foodservice businesses may not use any disposable foodservice ware that is made from polystyrene foam. The law applies to all foodservice businesses (restaurant, coffee shop, supermarket, grocery store, vending truck or cart, food truck, schools, business or institutional cafeteria).

The ban does not apply to food or beverages that are filled and sealed in polystyrene foam containers outside of the City before a foodservice business receives them. The ban also does not apply to materials used to package raw, uncooked, or butchered meats, fish, poultry or seafood for off-premises consumption.

City Health Department inspectors will check for compliance during routine inspections. Businesses in violation could be fined $200 by the City Health Department, or up to $1,000 for repeated violations that escalate to conviction by a judge.

A copy of the law can be downloaded HERE. Additional information can be found HERE.

Plastic Bag Ban & Alternative Bag Fee
Effective 10/1/2021, Baltimore City's *Comprehensive Bag Reduction Act* bans businesses from providing single-use plastic bags (less than 4 mils thick) to customers at the point of sale, pickup or delivery. City businesses must charge a minimum of $0.05 for each alternative bag (paper, or compostable bags that meet the ASTM D6400 standard specification, or plastic bags that are 4 mils or thicker) provided to customers at the point of sale, pickup or delivery. The alternative bag fee must be itemized on customer receipts. Businesses may keep $0.04 of each customer surcharge, and $0.01 of each surcharge must be remitted to the City.

Businesses must register for a Tax ID and remit the City's portion of collected surcharges through an online portal HERE. The law applies to restaurants, supermarkets, convenience stores, corner stores, shops, gas stations, and other sales outlets. The law allows exceptions for bags used for certain products, but not for prepared restaurant food purchases.

The Baltimore City Office of Sustainability (BCOS) has provided the following clarifications on other issues:

- *According to BCOS, the new bag law applies to bags provided at the point of sale, checkout or delivery by businesses within the City limits. Baltimore City retail businesses (including restaurants) are expected to charge customers the $0.05 fee regardless of the intended destination of the purchase/delivery. This means the use of plastic bags is also prohibited when delivering to customer addresses outside the City, and City businesses must also apply the surcharge for alternative bags used for deliveries outside the City.*

- *According to BCOS, the new bag law does not apply to businesses located outside the City when delivering to customer addresses within the City.*

- *According to BCOS, the alternative bag fee also applies when a restaurant provides a bag to dine-in customers for leftovers (doggie bags). Restaurants should advise staff to ask customers whether a doggie bag is needed before processing customer payments.*

More specific information about Baltimore City's plastic bag ban/alternative bag fee and related FAQs can be found at the BCOS website HERE.

Baltimore County

Plastic Bag Ban/Fee – Effective 11/1/2023

Effective November 1, 2023, plastic bags are generally banned in Baltimore County. Businesses must charge at least 5 cents for each paper or reusable bag provided to customers.

Small retail establishments (including small foodservice facilities) are exempt from both the plastic bag ban and paper bag fee. Small retail establishments are defined as a business that operates solely in Baltimore County or adjoining jurisdictions (Harford, Baltimore City, Carroll, Howard, Anne Arundel), has 3 or fewer physical locations, and is not part of a franchise, corporation, corporate control group or partnership that has physical locations outside of Baltimore County or adjoining jurisdictions. A small retail establishment does not include a convenience store or fuel service station.

Further, all foodservice facilities (regardless of size) are exempt from the requirement to charge a paper bag fee.

Violations are subject to a civil penalty not exceeding $500. A penalty cannot be imposed unless the business is first issued a written notice of violation and does not correct the violation within 7 days after receipt of notice.

A copy of the law can be found HERE. Additional compliance information can be found on the County website HERE.

*** ***IMPORTANT NOTE:*** ***In December 2023, RAM asked the County for clarification on whether all foodservice facilities were exempt from the plastic bag prohibition because of some inconsistency in the language of the law. In January 2024, we received clarification from Baltimore County Government that only food service facilities categorized as "small retail establishments" (definition above) are exempt from the plastic bag prohibition.*** ***

Centreville (Queen Anne's County)

Plastic Bag Ban/Fee – Effective 1/1/2024

Effective January 1, 2024, plastic carryout bags are banned in the Town of Centreville. Under the new ordinance, retail stores may offer customers paper carryout bags for a fee of at least 10 cents per bag. However, restaurants are exempt from charging the required paper bag fee.

The ban does not apply to plastic bags used by cottage food businesses, non-profits, religious organizations, location in a farmer's market, volunteer fire departments, or other "charitable organizations." Plastic bags used to package bulk items (produce, nuts/grains, small hardware items, etc.), frozen foods, meat,

fish or cheese, damp items (flowers, potted plants, etc.), unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods, a newspaper, laundry/dry cleaning, ice, live fish, insects, mollusks or crustaceans are also exempt from the plastic bag ban.

An enforcement penalty may not be imposed unless a retail establishment is first issued a written notice of violation. A second violation is subject to a municipal infraction and a fine not exceeding $1,000. Each subsequent violation is subject to a fine not exceeding $1,000.

A copy of the passed ordinance can be found HERE.

Chestertown (Kent County)

Plastic Bag Ban - Effective 1/19/2012

As of 1/19/2012, plastic checkout bags are generally banned for retail sale use in Chestertown. There are exceptions for foodservice carryout bags, dry cleaning bags, and small plastic bags used at grocery stores for items like produce, meat or seafood. Paper, compostable and reusable bags are permitted.

Businesses in violation can be fined $100 for a first violation and $200 for subsequent violations.

The language of the ordinance can be found HERE.

Charles County

Compostable Straws/Stirrers Only - Effective 7/1/2020

As of 7/1/2020, Charles County restaurants shall provide only compostable straws and stirrers. Non-compostable plastic straws/stirrers are prohibited. Violations are subject to a civil fine of up to $150 for each incident. Plastic straws affixed to packaging before a restaurant receives them (such as juice boxes) are exempt from the prohibition.

Under the law, *"compostable" carries the same definition as set forth in the Environment Article of the Maryland Annotated Code, Section 9-2102 (B) (1).* Under this definition, for a plastic product labeled as compostable, the plastic product shall meet the ASTM D6400 standard specification or the ASTM D6868 standard specification. This means that polylactic acid (PLA) alternatives would also be acceptable.

A copy of the law can be found HERE.

Easton (Talbot County)

Plastic Bag Ban/Fee – Effective 4/2/2023

Effective April 2, 2023, plastic carryout bags are banned at Town of Easton retail establishments. Under the new Ordinance, retail establishments may offer customers paper carryout bags for a fee of at least 10 cents per bag. Due to the efforts of RAM and some of our Easton restaurant operators, the Town Council **exempted restaurants and food service facilities** from the plastic bag ban and paper bag fee. A copy of the ordinance can be found HERE. Related compliance information can be found HERE.

City of Frederick (Frederick County)

Plastic Bag Ban – Effective 1/1/2024

Effective January 1, 2024, plastic bags are banned at the point of sale in the City of Frederick. The ban applies to any business that provides bags to its customers as a result of the sale of a product, including restaurants. The ban does not apply to plastic bags used for bulk items (produce, nuts/grains, small hardware items, etc.), uncooked meat or fish, unwrapped/non-prepackaged food, damp items (flowers, plants, etc.), packages containing multiple plastic bags (i.e., trash or food storage bags), live fish, insects, mollusks or crustaceans, laundry/dry cleaning, and any plastic used for sanitary, public health or environmental protection purposes.

Violations are subject to a municipal infraction punishable by a fine not exceeding $500.

A copy of the ordinance can be found HERE.

Howard County

Retail Store Plastic Bag Fee** (excludes restaurants) - **Effective 10/1/2020
Plastic Straw/Stirrer/Foodware Restrictions - Effective 1/1/2022; Enforcement Begins 7/1/2022

Retail Store Plastic Bag Fee
As of 10/1/2020, Howard County retail stores providing plastic carryout bags to customers must charge a fee of 5 cents per bag. This law does not apply to restaurants. However, restaurants are required to complete the Howard County Bag Fee Program Exemption Agreement.

What is considered a restaurant for the purpose of the Howard County bag fee exemption? A place located in a permanent building with a kitchen equipped with the necessary amenities and utensils for preparing meals for customers. The place must contain a public dining area where the meal of their choosing may be served and eaten on the premises. Such restaurants may also offer take-out and food delivery services. A restaurant does not include convenience stores, delis, and mini-marts unless they have an eat-in area with tables. (An establishment with raised tables with or without seating where people may stand and eat also counts as a restaurant.)

More information about the law can be found HERE.

Plastic Straw/Stirrer/Foodware Restrictions (Plastic Reduction Law)
Effective 1/1/2022, Howard County foodservice facilities are prohibited from providing plastic straws and stirrers (including PLA and other plant-based polymers) to customers unless requested. Straws and stirrers made of paper, bamboo, or other material that can be labeled as "home compostable," may be provided without restriction (customer request not required), as well as reusable straws/stirrers. Plastic straws/stirrers may not be made available in self-service areas nor provided to drive-through customers unless requested. Foodservice staff may proactively ask customers if they want a plastic straw/stirrer and it would be considered a "request."

Also, effective 1/1/2022, disposable plastic foodware and plastic condiment packets may not be provided to customers unless requested. Restricted plastic foodware items include hot/cold beverage cups, single-use cutlery, plates, bowls, food containers, bowl/container lids, trays and other hinged or lidded containers. Plastic lids for beverage cups are exempt. Plastic foodware and condiment packets can be made available in self-service areas (plastic straws/stirrers may not be made available in self-service areas). For drive-through sales, plastic foodware and condiment packets may be provided if requested by customer; or plastic foodware if the foodservice facility provides signage that identifies the different plastic foodware items being distributed with the sale. Otherwise, foodservice staff may proactively ask customers if they want any of the items that are restricted under the law and it would be considered a "request." Howard County foodservice facilities can provide paper (or fiber), compostable, reusable or other non-plastic (and non-PLA) foodware without customer request.

Although this law became effective on 1/1/2022, enforcement (fines and penalties for violations) begins on 7/1/2022. The Howard County Office of Community Sustainability (OCS) says that enforcement will be complaint driven. When OCS receives a complaint, a letter will be sent to the business detailing the requirements of the law. Potential fines for violations cannot exceed $250 for a first violation, $500 for a second violation and $1,000 for a third violation.

More information about the plastic reduction law can be found HERE.

Montgomery County

Plastic Bag Ban/Fee – Effective 1/1/2026
Polystyrene Ban/Disposable Foodservice Ware Restrictions - Effective 1/1/2016 & 1/1/2017
Straw/Stirrer Restrictions - Effective 5/1/2021 & 12/21/2021
Polystyrene #6 (rigid) Ban - Effective 1/1/2022

Plastic Bag Ban/Fee

Effective January 1, 2026, Montgomery County has banned plastic carryout bags and requires most retailers to charge a 10-cent fee for each paper carryout bag provided. Of that fee, 5 cents must be remitted to the County and 5 cents may be retained by the business.

Restaurants, however, are exempt from the requirement to charge a bag fee.

Violations will result in a Class B civil citation. After receiving written notice, businesses will have 7 days to correct the issue before penalties apply: $100 for the initial violation and $150 for each repeat violation.

More information about the law can be found HERE.

Important Note: Some municipalities in Montgomery County are exempt from the plastic bag ban because they have not adopted the County law or their own plastic bag ban law. These municipalities must still charge the 10-cent tax on all carryout bags, regardless of material.

In these municipalities, restaurants may use paper bags without charging the tax, since the restaurant exemption applies only to paper bags. However, if a restaurant chooses to use plastic bags, the 10-cent tax must be charged.

Municipalities that have not adopted the law or their own plastic bag ban law as of 1/1/2026 include: Town of Barnesville, Chevy Chase Village, Chevy Chase Section 3, City of Gaithersburg, Town of Garrett Park, Town of Glen Echo, Village of Martin's Addition, Town of Somerset, and Town of Washington Grove.

Polystyrene Ban/Disposable Foodservice Ware Restrictions
As of 1/1/2016, Montgomery County banned the use of "expanded polystyrene" (polystyrene foam) disposable foodservice ware. As of 1/1/2017, all disposable foodservice ware products must be recyclable (in the County's recycling program) or compostable.

The law applies to all foodservice businesses. "Disposable foodservice ware" includes containers, bowls, plates, trays, cartons, cups, lids, and other items that are designed for one-time use for food and beverages from a foodservice business (excludes forks, knives and spoons). Disposable foodservice ware does not include items composed entirely of aluminum. The ban does not apply to food or beverages that were filled and packaged in polystyrene containers outside of the County before a foodservice business received them, or to materials used to package raw, uncooked, or butchered meat, fish, poultry or seafood for off-premises consumption.

Enforcement is complaint driven. Violations are subject to a civil fine of $100 for a first offense and $150 for a repeat offense.

More comprehensive information can be found HERE.

Straw Restrictions
As of 5/1/2021, County foodservice businesses are prohibited from providing straws to dine-in customers, unless a straw is requested by the customer or available to customers in a self-serve straw dispenser. Straws may be provided for carryout, delivery, and drive-thru sales as usual without customer request.

Effective 12/21/2021, County foodservice businesses are restricted to providing only home compostable, marine degradable or reusable straws. Such straws include straws made of paper, bamboo, silicone, or stainless steel. Straws made of plastic or polylactic acid (PLA) may not be provided as of 12/21/2021. However, to comply with local, state or federal disability laws, foodservice businesses are required to keep a limited supply of plastic straws to accommodate a customer's medical or disability-related needs upon request. Foodservice businesses are required to post information notifying customers of such.

NOTE FROM LAW LANGUAGE:
"Home compostable" means a material that has the ability to completely biodegrade in an outdoor, non-industrial environment, leaving no toxic substances or residue. Home compostable includes products that meet the "OK Compost Home" certification standard adopted by Vincotte.

"Marine degradable" means a material that has the ability to completely biodegrade under marine environmental conditions including marine waters or marine sediments, leaving no toxic substances or residue.

Violations are subject to a civil fine of $100 for a first offense and $150 for a repeat offense.

More compliance information, including posting requirements, can be found HERE.

Polystyrene #6 (rigid) Ban
Effective 1/1/2022, Montgomery County foodservice businesses are prohibited from using any type of polystyrene (PS #6) disposable foodservice ware. This includes polystyrene foam (already banned) and also all forms of rigid (hard plastic) PS #6 products, such as non-foam/rigid containers, bowls, plates, trays,

cartons, cups, lids, etc. Disposable foodservice ware must be recyclable (in the County's recycling program) or compostable. The ban on PS #6 disposable foodservice ware does NOT include forks, spoons and knives. The law also prohibits the sale of any polystyrene foodservice products in the County.

Violations are subject to a civil fine of $100 for a first offense and $150 for a repeat offense.

Related compliance information can be found HERE.

City of Rockville

Polystyrene Foam and #6 Ban – Same as Montgomery County's polystyrene ban
Plastic Straw Restriction - Effective 7/1/2019

Although located in Montgomery County, the City of Rockville has a slightly different straw restriction for businesses operating within its jurisdiction. The City's Environmental Management Division advises that restaurants within its jurisdiction should continue to comply with Rockville's Single-Use Plastic Straw Prohibition, which can be found HERE.

Rockville foodservice establishments are prohibited from automatically providing single-use plastic straws. However, straws made of paper, bamboo, metal, sugar cane, hay, wood, glass, pasta or polylactic acid (PLA) are not prohibited.

Additionally, the following single-use plastic straws are not prohibited:

(1) Straws requested by the customer obtaining the beverage. No customer will be required to show proof of need to obtain a single-use plastic straw;

(2) Straws that will be recycled or composted;

(3) Straws that the foodservice establishment has demonstrated to the satisfaction of the City are integral to the nature of the hot or cold beverage being served.

(4) To pursue the exception set out in subparagraph 3 above, a business must assert that some or all of its beverages are so viscous that they require a straw to consume. This request will be submitted to the Chief of Environmental Management. A business that has demonstrated that the straw is integral to the consumption of some or all its beverages must renew this exception every five years.

Violations are subject to an administrative fine of $25. Each single-use plastic straw provided to a customer in violation of the ordinance constitutes a separate offense.

Garrett Park

Polystyrene Foam and #6 Ban – Same as Montgomery County's polystyrene ban
Plastic Straw/Stirrer Ban - Effective 3/3/2019

As of 3/3/2019, town restaurants and businesses may no longer provide or sell plastic straws or stirrers. There is an exception for customers who request such plastic implement to accommodate a disability. Plastic straws affixed to packaging before a restaurant receives them (such as juice boxes) are exempt from the prohibition. Only straws made of biodegradable materials, such as paper or hay, may be used.

Violations are subject to a fine of $100.

A copy of the ordinance can be found on page 4 HERE.

Takoma Park

Polystyrene Ban - Effective 7/1/2015
Plastic Straw/Stirrer Ban - Effective 1/1/2020

Enacted in 2015, Takoma Park's polystyrene ban contains different provisions than the ban generally applicable in Montgomery County.

Violations are a Class C offense subject to a fine of $200 for a first offense and $400 for repeat offenses.

More information about Takoma Park's polystyrene ban can be found HERE.

Plastic Straw Ban
As of 1/1/2020, all forms of plastic straws/stirrers are banned in Takoma Park, including bioplastics like polylactic acid (PLA) and other forms of biologically based polymers. The ban does not include straws/stirrers made from non-plastic materials.

Violations are a Class D offense subject to a fine of $100 for a first offense and $200 for repeat offenses.

More information about Takoma Park's plastic straw/stirrer ban can be found HERE.

Prince George's County

Polystyrene Foam Ban - Effective 7/1/2016
Compostable Straws/Stirrers Only - Effective 7/1/2020; Enforcement fines begin 1/1/2021
Accessory Disposables Restriction – Effective 6/1/2023
Plastic Bag Ban/Fee – Effective 1/1/2024
College Park, Laurel – Local Bag Ordinances

Polystyrene Foam Ban
As of 7/1/2016, Prince George's County banned the use of "expanded polystyrene" (polystyrene foam) disposable foodservice ware.

The law applies to all foodservice businesses. The ban does not apply to food or beverages that are filled and sealed in polystyrene foam containers outside of the County before a foodservice business receives them, or to materials used to package raw, uncooked, or butchered meat, fish, poultry or seafood for off-premises consumption.

Warnings will be issued for a first violation. A $250 fine will be issued for the second violation, and a $1,000 fine for the third violation within a 12-month period. Each day a violation exists is a separate offense.

More information about the law can be found HERE.

Compostable Straws/Stirrers Only

As of 7/1/2020, Prince George's County foodservice businesses shall not sell, distribute or otherwise provide a straw or stirrer with food or beverage unless the straw or stirrer is compostable. Paper straws are compliant. However, compostable bioplastic polylactic acid (PLA) straws are prohibited. Stirrers made of wood are compliant. The County has posted compliance materials HERE.

Plastic straws affixed to packaging before a foodservice business receives them (such as juice boxes) are exempt from the prohibition. Each foodservice business shall keep a limited stock of plastic straws available to accommodate any individual's physical or medical needs and remain compliant with local, State, and federal disability rights laws.

Violations are subject to a warning for a first violation, $250 fine for a second violation, and a fine of $1,000 for a third violation within a twelve-month period. Enforcement fines begin 1/1/2021. The Department of Environment is responsible for enforcement, but may partner with inspectors of other departments (e.g., Health Department). The text of the law can be found in the County Code HERE.

Accessory Disposable Foodservice Ware– Upon Request
Effective June 1, 2023, foodservice businesses may only provide "accessory disposable foodservice ware" to customers upon request or at a self-service station. This law does not prohibit servers or cashiers from proactively asking if a customer needs such disposable foodservice ware. Enforcement and regulation are under the authority of Prince George's County's Department of the Environment. Enforcement fines for violations begin October 1, 2023.

Important Details:

- Accessory disposable foodservice ware means straws, utensils, condiment cups/packets, cup sleeves, splash sticks, stirrers, and napkins, designed to be used once and then discarded.

- Applies to dine-in, take-out, and third-party orders (DoorDash, Grubhub, Uber Eats, etc.). By August 1, 2023, third-party food ordering platforms shall provide customers the ability to affirmatively request accessory disposable foodservice ware, and shall provide a foodservice business with the ability to customize its menu with a list of available accessory disposable foodservice ware. Only those specific items selected by the customer shall be provided by the foodservice business.

Additional compliance information can be found HERE.

Plastic Bag Ban/Fee
****** NOTE: Prince George's County law supersedes ordinances passed by local jurisdictions. However, local jurisdictions can be more stringent in their plastic bag ban/fee ordinances. If your business is located in College Park or Laurel, please ensure that you adhere to the specific compliance information provided for those municipalities where more stringent than County law. ******

Effective January 1, 2024, plastic carryout bags are banned in Prince George's County. Businesses (including restaurants) may offer customers paper carryout bags and must charge a fee of at least 10 cents per bag. Under the County law, restaurants are not required to charge for paper bags at drive-through windows, or bags provided for leftovers (doggie bags). The restaurant exemptions for bag fees in these two circumstances do not apply under more stringent local carryout bag ordinances in College Park and Laurel.

The ban does not apply to plastic bags used to package bulk items (produce, nuts/grains, small hardware items, etc.), frozen foods, meat or fish, damp items (flowers, potted plants, etc.), unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods, laundry/dry cleaning, live fish, insects, mollusks or crustaceans.

Warnings will be issued for a first violation. A second violation is subject to a civil penalty and a fine not exceeding $500.

More information about the Prince George's County bag law can be found HERE.

College Park

Plastic Bag Ban/Fee – Effective 9/1/2023

Effective September 1, 2023, plastic carryout bags are banned in the City of College Park. Under the new ordinance, businesses (including restaurants) may offer customers paper carryout bags or a reusable bag for a fee of at least 10 cents per bag. Businesses must indicate on customer receipt the number of paper or reusable carryout bags provided and total amount charged.

The ban does not apply to plastic bags used by cottage food businesses, non-profits, religious organizations, volunteer fire departments, or other charitable organizations. Plastic bags used to package bulk items (produce, nuts/grains, small hardware items, etc.), fresh meat or seafood, damp items (flowers, potted plants, etc.), unwrapped prepared foods or bakery goods, laundry/dry cleaning, live fish, insects, mollusks or crustaceans are also exempt from the ban.

Warnings will be issued for a first violation. A second violation is subject to a municipal infraction and a fine of either $200 or $500. Each subsequent violation is subject to a fine of either $200 or $500.

A copy of the ordinance can be found HERE. The City of College Park has posted a guide and FAQs which can be found HERE.

Laurel

Plastic Bag Ban – Effective 1/1/2022
Paper Bag Fee – Effective 1/1/2024

As of January 1, 2022, plastic bags are banned at the point of sale in the City of Laurel. The ban applies to supermarkets, retail stores, convenience stores, restaurants, service stations, farmers markets and other establishments engaged in the retail sale of goods.

Compliant alternatives to plastic bags include paper bags that are 100% recyclable and contain at least 40% post-consumer recycled content.

The ban does not apply to plastic bags used for bulk items (produce, nuts/grains, small hardware items, etc.), laundry/dry cleaning, fresh/frozen foods, meat or seafood, flowers or plants, unwrapped prepared foods or bakery items, ice, or live fish, insects, mollusks or crustaceans.

Beginning on January 1, 2024, all businesses must charge at least 10 cents for each paper bag provided.

Violations are subject to a fine not to exceed $200. A copy of the passed ordinance can be found HERE.

Salisbury (Wicomico County)

Plastic Bag Ban/Fee – Effective 7/1/2023
Restaurant/Foodservice Bag Fee Exemption – Effective October 2023

Effective July 1, 2023, plastic carryout bags are banned in the City of Salisbury. Under the new ordinance, businesses may offer customers paper carryout bags or a reusable bag for a fee of at least 10 cents per bag. Establishments must indicate on the receipt the number of paper or reusable carryout bags provided and total amount charged.

As of October 2023, the City Council amended its ordinance to exempt foodservice facilities from the requirement to charge a 10-cent bag fee.

Salisbury has posted a guide and FAQs which can be found HERE.

Westminster (Carroll County)

Plastic Bag Ban - Effective 7/1/2020

As of 7/1/2020, plastic bags are generally banned in the City of Westminster. Plastic bags used by restaurants for take-out by customers or for delivery to residential customers are exempt from the ban. Plastic bags used by other types of businesses with fewer than 25 employees at all business locations owned by the same person or entity are also exempt (this exemption does not apply to franchised establishments).

The ban does not apply to plastic bags used for laundry/dry cleaning, newspapers, door hangers, pharmacy, or bags used inside a business establishment to hold bulk items (produce, nuts, grains, candy, etc.), frozen foods, meat or fish, flowers, and unwrapped prepared foods or baked goods.

Violations are subject to a $100 fine for a first offense, $200 fine for a second offense within any 12-month period, and $500 for each additional violation within any 12-month period. The text of the Ordinance can be found in the City Code HERE.