



Reusable Bag Law for Alameda County

Expansion to Eating Establishments

On November 1, 2017, the Reusable Bag Law for Alameda County expanded to include all eating establishments, which includes delivery services and ordering platforms. To avoid a citation, be sure to follow the law's requirements:



1. **No more single-use plastic bags.**

Eating establishments (and their delivery services/providers) in Alameda County can no longer provide single-use plastic bags to their customers.



2. **No charge for paper bags.**

Recycled content paper bags may be distributed for free. If your eating establishment only provides compliant paper bags, no additional action is necessary.



3. **Protective plastic bags without handles are allowed.**

The law only applies to carryout bags, not to paper or plastic bags without handles that are used to protect food (such as around containers of soup or stew to prevent spilling).



4. **Charge 10 cents for reusable bags.**

Compliant reusable bags (including thick, reusable plastic bags) may be distributed if at least ten cents is charged and itemized on the receipt. The eating establishment keeps the 10 cent charge, which is not subject to sales tax.

Who is Affected?

The expansion of this ordinance applies to all establishments selling prepared food and beverages to the public. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Restaurants
- Cafés
- Food Trucks
- Coffee Shops
- Bars
- Bakeries
- To-Go & Meal Delivery Vendors
- Delis
- Cafeterias

Visit www.ReusableBagsAC.org for more information, and sources for compliant bags.



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Bag Requirements and Sources

Tips to comply with the law:

- Simply don't offer a bag (or ask the customer if they need one)! Many customers really don't want that bag - you'll save money and resources this way.
- Use paper bags for take-out/to go orders. Paper bags can be composted locally and don't litter our waterways.
- If you really need to provide plastic bags with handles, you must use a compliant durable plastic bag, charge 10 cents for each bag you provide, and itemize that charge on the receipt.



Where to Buy Compliant Reusable Bags:

Please note that bag suppliers may sell non-compliant bags in addition to compliant bags. Verify that the bags you are ordering meet the criteria for the Reusable Bag Ordinance.

- All bags currently listed on the State website meet the requirements of the Alameda County Reusable Bag Ordinance. www2.calrecycle.ca.gov/ReusableBags
- Compostable bags do NOT meet the Alameda County reusable bag requirements.
- Local sources for compliant reusable bags: www.ReusableBagsAC.org/sources

Bag Requirements:

Recycled Content Paper Bags

The paper bags your eating establishment provides must meet the following requirements:



- Paper bags must contain no old growth fibers
- Bags must be a minimum of 40 percent post-consumer recycled content paper
- Bags must be 100 percent recyclable and compostable, including the handles
- Bags must have all the following information printed in a highly visible manner on the outside of the bag:
 - The word "recyclable"
 - Name and country of the manufacturer
 - The percentage of post-consumer recycled content paper

Reusable Bags

Reusable bags that your eating establishment offers for sale must have handles and be designed and manufactured to:



- Have a minimum lifetime of 125 uses, which means capable of carrying a minimum of 22 pounds 125 times over a distance of at least 175 feet
- Hold a minimum volume of 15 liters
- Be machine washable or made from a material that can be cleaned or disinfected
- Be at least 2.25 mils thick, if made of plastic
- Have printed on the bag or on a permanent tag all of the following: Name of the manufacturer; Country of manufacture; A true statement that the bag does not contain lead, cadmium or other heavy metal in toxic amounts; Percent of post-consumer recycled material used in the bag, if any



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