
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2023ENV0067-001900
Dec. 1, 2023

Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

New plastic requirements will give people better choices

Updated Dec. 1, 2023

VICTORIA – The Province continues to take action to support the clean economy by preventing plastic waste and pollution.

People will not receive items like cutlery and condiments unless they need them, and can expect to see options that support a healthier environment and cleaner economy.

“We want to ensure people have the best options available to effectively transition from single-use plastics,” said George Heyman, Minister of Environment and Climate Change Strategy. “We’re working with industry to make good environmental choices easier so British Columbians can use products that decrease pollution and emissions.”

In July 2023, B.C. announced the Single-Use and Plastic Waste Prevention Regulation, which will limit the use of plastic shopping bags, disposable food service accessories, oxo-degradable plastics, and food-service packaging made of polystyrene foam, PVC, PVDC, compostable and biodegradable plastics.

To better support businesses and industries to source alternative products, government has adjusted the rollout of some items under B.C.’s regulation until July 15, 2024. This will mean no plastic shopping bags at checkouts, a small fee for paper and reusable bags and fewer plastics. When more time is needed to source alternatives for some products, such as PVC film wrap and polystyrene foam trays used for meat, poultry and seafood, additional time will be allowed before they are prohibited (see backgrounder for a detailed list and rollout times).

Phasing out single-use plastics is part of the CleanBC Plastics Action Plan’s goal of changing how plastic is designed and used, from temporary and disposable, to durable and reusable.

Provincial actions to address plastic waste and pollution include:

- enabling local governments to ban plastic shopping bags and certain single-use plastics;
- adding milk and milk-substitute beverage containers to B.C.’s deposit-refund system to capture the millions of containers from restaurants, schools and offices without a dedicated recycling system;
- adding all residential single-use and packaging-like products to B.C.’s recycling stream;
- allocating more than \$46 million toward new composting facilities in B.C. to divert organic material from landfills and improve composting technology;
- investing approximately \$40 million in the CleanBC Plastics Action Fund, which supports B.C.-based innovators to reduce plastic waste, reuse items and include more recycled material in the manufacturing of products;
- establishing dedicated Indigenous-led project funding under the CleanBC Plastics Action

- Fund, with an initial eight projects receiving more than \$1.3 million;
- supporting the largest shoreline cleanup in B.C.'s history through Clean Coast, Clean Waters, with more than 1,500 tonnes of marine debris removed to date, and more than 60% of shoreline material reused/recycled; and,
 - phasing in the recycling of new products, such as electric vehicle batteries, mattresses, compressed canisters and medical sharps over the next four years under the Extended Producer Responsibility Five-Year Plan.

Learn More:

For more information and regulation guidelines, visit: <http://www.gov.bc.ca/reuse>

To view the Single-Use and Plastic Waste Prevention Regulation, visit:
www.bclaws.gov.bc.ca/civix/document/id/oic/oic_cur/0642_2023

For more information about B.C. legislation, visit: <https://workingforyou.gov.bc.ca/legislation>

A backgrounder follows.

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BACKGROUND

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Regulation implementation timelines

The regulation supports B.C.'s efforts to prevent single-use and plastic waste, divert more waste from landfills and keep consumer products working longer.

Dec. 20, 2023

Banned:

- plastic utensils, including spoons, forks, knives, chopsticks, stir sticks and drink splash plugs
- pre-packed bundled food service accessories

By customer request only or from a self-service station:

- wooden utensils
- cup lids and sleeves
- straws
- condiments
- napkins
- wet wipes
- garnishes (e.g., plastic sushi grass, umbrellas for drinks)

July 15, 2024

Banned:

- plastic shopping bags, with a minimum fee on new reusable and paper bags.
- food-service ware* made of biodegradable plastic, polystyrene foam (i.e., Styrofoam), polyvinyl chloride (PVC), or polyvinylidene chloride (PVDC) materials
- film wrap made from biodegradable plastic or PVDC
- all oxo-degradable plastics

For limited use (i.e., not prepared food for takeout, delivery or immediate consumption):

- food-service ware and film wrap made from compostable plastic

* Food-service ware is bowls, boxes or cartons, cups, containers, plates, platters and trays.

July 1, 2028

Banned:

- PVC film wrap

July 1, 2030

Banned:

- polystyrene foam trays

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