

# NAVIGATING PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL SINGLE-USE PLASTIC REGULATIONS

Canada’s federal, provincial, and municipal governments have implemented prohibitions on single-use plastics that will impact your businesses.

ABLE BC recognizes that navigating these regulations can be confusing. To simplify and clarify your obligations, we’ve put together this comprehensive guide, highlighting both federal and provincial regulations. While there is overlap in the content of these regulations, it’s crucial to consider both for a clear understanding.







In response to feedback from British Columbians, the provincial regulations are shifting to a phased implementation. While plastic items are prohibited as of December 20, 2023, some additional requirements will take effect July 15, 2024.

## FEDERAL REGULATIONS

On June 22, 2022, the Government of Canada introduced the [Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations](#). To prevent plastic pollution, the Regulations prohibit the manufacture, import, and sale of six categories of single-use plastics.

Coming into effect December 2023, the import and sale (including providing for free) of the following are banned:

### SINGLE-USE PLASTIC ITEMS PROHIBITED BY THE REGULATIONS

 <p><b>Checkout Bags</b></p>	 <p><b>Cutlery</b></p>	 <p><b>Ring Carriers</b></p>
<p>designed to carry purchased goods from a business and typically given to a customer at the retail point of sale.</p>	<p>includes knives, forks, spoons, sporks, and chopsticks.</p>	<p>flexible and designed to surround beverage containers in order to carry them together.</p>
 <p><b>Stir Sticks</b></p>	 <p><b>Foodservice Ware</b></p>	 <p><b>Straws</b></p>
<p>designed to stir or mix beverages, or to prevent a beverage from spilling from the lid of its container.</p>	<p>designed for serving or transporting food or beverage that is ready to be consumed and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is a clamshell container, lidded container, box, cup, plate or bowl; and</li> <li>• contains expanded or extruded polystyrene foam, polyvinyl chloride, carbon black or an oxo-degradable plastic.</li> </ul>	<p>includes straight drinking straws and flexible straws, which have a corrugated section that allows the straw to bend, packaged with beverage container.</p>

Source: Fact Sheet – [Single Use Plastic Prohibition Regulations](#)

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## PROVINCIAL REGULATIONS

The provincial [Single-Use and Plastic Waste Prevention Regulation](#) was introduced on July 14, 2023, and comes into effect on December 20, 2023. Additional requirements, such as minimum fees on reusable and paper shopping bags, will come into effect July 15, 2024. PVC film wrap will be prohibited on July 1, 2028.



The province has identified four regulated categories:

- [Shopping Bags](#)
- [Disposable Food Service Accessories](#)
- [Food Service Ware](#)
- [Oxo-degradable Plastics](#) (plastics with additives designed to break down into microplastics)

The City of Vancouver has compiled some suggested alternatives for common single use plastic products.

## SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVES

For a complete and up-to-date list, visit [VANCOUVER.CA/REDUCE-SINGLE-USE](https://VANCOUVER.CA/REDUCE-SINGLE-USE)

ITEM	REUSABLE	RECYCLABLE <small>Accepted in Recycle BC's residential recycling collection program</small>	COMPOSTABLE <small>Accepted in the City of Vancouver Green Bin</small>
CONTAINERS	<p>Ceramics, Tiffins, Steel trays/Containers, Plastic, Plastic bowls, Glass jars</p>	<p>Paper containers coated in plastic, Aluminum containers, Plastic containers</p>	<p>Moulded fibre or pulp containers, Paper plates and bags, Leaf plates and cups</p>
STRAWS	<p>Metal straws, Glass straws, Silicone straws</p>	RECYCLABLE SUBSTITUTES ARE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE	<p>Paper straws, Pasta straws, Hay straws</p>
UTENSILS	<p>Metal cutlery and chopsticks, Wood or plastic chopsticks, Plastic and ceramic cutlery</p>	RECYCLABLE SUBSTITUTES ARE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE	<p>Wood and bamboo utensils, Unpainted wood or bamboo chopsticks</p>
CUPS	<p>Ceramics, Glassware, Reusable travel mugs</p>	<p>Paper cups and containers coated with plastic, Rigid plastic cups with plastic lids</p>	COMPOSTABLE SUBSTITUTES ARE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE
SHOPPING BAGS	<p>Cotton, canvas and string bags, Jute and burlap bags, Nylon and polyester, Recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET), Woven and non-woven polypropylene (PP)</p>	<p>Paper bags with paper or fibre handles</p>	COMPOSTABLE SUBSTITUTES ARE NOT CURRENTLY AVAILABLE

Source: [City of Vancouver](#)



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## WHAT CHANGES FOR ME?

Under the new provincial regulations, businesses are now required to:

### SHOPPING BAGS:

- Stop using single-use plastic, compostable, and biodegradable plastic shopping bags. Only paper shopping bags or reusable bags may be provided.
- As of July 15, 2024, charge a minimum fee of \$0.25 for paper shopping bags and \$2.00 for new reusable shopping bags.
- Offer customers the option to use their own bag (e.g. asking, displaying a sign, or via a check box online). Customers can choose to not use a bag.
- Let the customer know how much it will cost prior to selling a bag.

### FOOD SERVICE WARE:

- Stop selling or distributing single-use food service ware made completely or partly from Class B materials (i.e. biodegradable plastics, polystyrene foam, PVC or PVDC). This includes selling or distributing food or drinks packaged in single-use food service ware.

### DISPOSABLE FOOD SERVICE ACCESSORIES:

- Stop providing single-use utensils made completely or partly from plastic, including compostable or biodegradable plastic.
- Stop providing pre-bundled single-use food service accessories (e.g. a knife, fork, spoon, and napkin packaged together).
- Only provide single-use utensils made from alternatives (e.g. wood, bamboo) and other single use food service accessories by-request or via a self-serve station.

### OXO-DEGRADABLE PLASTICS:

- Stop selling or distributing any packaging, or single-use product made partly or completely from oxo-degradable plastics. PVC film wrap will be prohibited on July 1, 2028.



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## TIMELINES

In July 2021, the BC government gave municipalities the authority to regulate four specific single-use items: checkout bags, straws, utensils, and polystyrene foam containers. Many municipalities already have bylaws in effect from as far back as 2020.

To see which municipalities have approved bylaws, see [municipal bylaws for single-use plastics](#).

The provincial and federal timelines are aligned to make the transition easier.

As of December 20, 2023, prohibited plastic products (except plastic ring carriers) are banned. Plastic ring carriers will be banned on June 20, 2024.

## RESOURCES

- [British Columbia's Provincial and Municipal Guidelines](#)
- [Government of Canada's Federal Technical Guidelines](#)
- [Single-use Plastics Prohibition Regulations](#)
- [British Columbia's Single-Use and Plastic Waste Prevention Regulation](#)
- [Plan for the Ban: New Year, New Canadian Plastics Regulation Update](#)
- [Restaurants Canada Webinar: Decoding Canada's Plastic Regulations for Foodservice Businesses](#)
- [Restaurants Canada Webinar: Driving Circular Solutions- BC Environment Ministry & Innovative Entrepreneurs Tackle Single-Use Plastic Challenges](#)



For more information, questions or resources please reach out to [ann@ablebc.ca](mailto:ann@ablebc.ca)