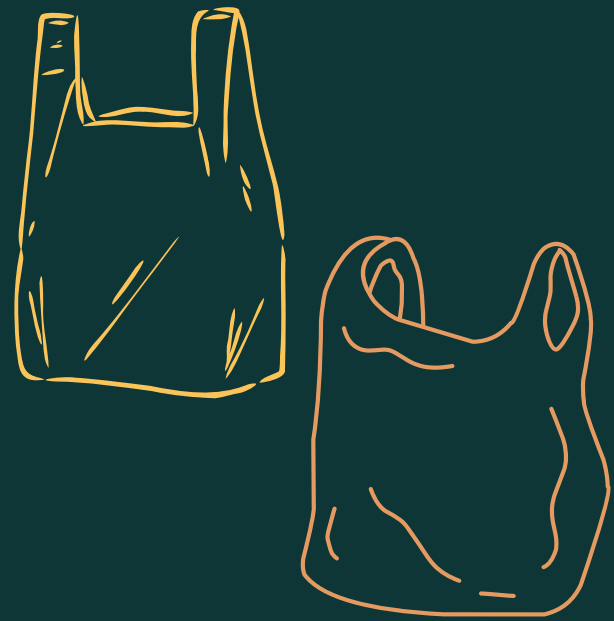


# State of Rhode Island Plastic Bag Ban

Effective Date: January 1, 2024

## Background

The [Rhode Island Plastic Waste Reduction Act \(Bag Ban\)](#) prohibits the use of single-use plastic bags by retail establishments. The state law passed in 2022 and went into effect on January 1, 2024. The law is jointly enforced by the local municipality and RI DEM. Visit the Providence Sustainability Department [website](#) for more information.



## Guidelines

- If a retail establishment provides a checkout bag to customers at the point of sale, the bag shall comply with the requirements of being a reusable bag or a recyclable paper bag.
- Checkout bags do not include:
  - Bags used to contain produce, bulk goods, or loose prepared foods like bakery items
  - Bags used to contain frozen foods, meat or fish, and flowers or potted plants
  - Newspaper and door-hanger bags
  - Laundry or dry-cleaning bags
  - Bags sold in packages containing multiple bags (e.g. garbage or pet waste bags)
- If a retail establishment continues to offer single-use plastic bags, the City will issue a warning notice to the retailer alerting them to the law and requesting compliance.
- If an additional violation occurs, the City shall issue a notice of violation and shall impose the following:
  - \$100 for the first violation
  - \$200 for the second violation
  - \$500 for the third and any subsequent violations
- Payment of fines may be enforced through civil action in the City Municipal Court.

## Acceptable alternatives to single-use plastic bags

- Reusable Bags: a bag with handles that are stitched and is specifically designed and manufactured for one hundred twenty-five (125) or more reuses, and is made primarily of washable cloth, other durable woven or nonwoven fabric, polyester, polypropylene, or other durable plastic with a minimum thickness of four (4.0) mils.
- Recyclable Paper Bags: a paper bag that is one hundred percent (100%) recyclable including the handles, contains at least forty percent (40%) post-consumer paper content, and displays the word “recyclable” and the percentage of post-consumer paper content in a visible manner on the outside of the bag.

## 5 Reasons PVD says ‘NO’ to Single-Use Plastic Bags

- 1) Americans use 100 billion plastic bags per year, which uses 12 million barrels of oil to make.
- 2) The average American family takes home almost 1,500 plastic shopping bags per year.
- 3) Plastic bags are used for an average of 12 minutes.
- 4) 100,000 marine animals are killed by plastic bags annually.
- 5) It takes at least 500 years for a plastic bag to degrade.

