



WA PLASTICS BAN

Business Engagement Program

A GUIDE FOR BUSINESS

From **1 July 2022**, it is illegal to supply:



Any Plastic
Shopping Bag
with Handles



Disposable
Plastic Straws
& Stirrers



Disposable
Plastic Cutlery



Disposable
Plastic Plates



Disposable
Plastic Bowls
(without lids)



Disposable
Plastic Food
Containers
(without lids)



Expanded
Polystyrene Food
Containers & Trays



Disposable
Plastic Cups for
Cold Drinks*

*Banned from **1 Oct 2022**

*Some exemptions and other banned items apply.

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Why

Plastics have become a part of everyday life. They are inexpensive, convenient and used in many applications. However, many single-use plastics either end up as litter or landfill.

In 2019, the WA Government received over 9,400 submissions which indicated strong support for reducing the impacts of single-use plastics. In June 2021, the Government announced it was fast-tracking Western Australia's Plan for Plastics to commence in 2022.

When

The ban commenced 1 January 2022, but will be enforceable at staggered dates through 2022 to provide time for businesses to comply.

- **1 January 2022:** It is illegal to provide false or misleading information about banned items.
- **1 July 2022:** It is illegal to supply banned items except cups. It is also illegal to release a balloon into the air.
- **1 October 2022:** It is illegal to supply banned cups.

Further bans are planned to commence 1 January 2023, however delayed enforcement similar to the current ban approach will be considered. Opportunities to provide input and feedback on these regulations will be provided in 2022. Register for updates at www.plasticsbanwa.com.au

Banned from 1 July 2022

- ✗ All plastic shopping bags with handles
- ✗ Disposable plastic utensils - straws, stirrers and cutlery
- ✗ Disposable plastic foodware without lids - plates, bowls and food containers
- ✗ Expanded polystyrene food containers and trays
- ✗ Balloon releases

Banned from 1 October 2022

- ✗ Disposable plastic cups for cold drinks

Who

The ban applies to anyone who supplies these items in Western Australia.

- **Retail or hospitality businesses** such as restaurants, cafes, bars, hotels, takeaway food outlets, party supply stores, discount stores, supermarkets, market stalls, online stores, delivery services, and any other retailer must not supply banned items.
- **Manufacturers, suppliers, distributors and wholesalers** must not supply banned items in WA.
- **Community groups and not-for-profits**, such as those that use items as part of a service, for daily activities, or during events or fundraising activities, must not supply banned items.

Exemptions apply in certain settings to allow the supply of single-use plastic straws to people with a disability or healthcare need. See website for more information.

Businesses (such as distribution centres and online stores) can supply a banned item to a person outside WA, but we recommend checking for similar bans in other jurisdictions.

How

The **WA Plan for Plastics** is being implemented by the WA Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (DWER).

DWER will firstly work with businesses and organisations to ensure they understand their obligations, and has launched a state-wide consumer awareness campaign in early 2022.

From the enforcement dates, it will be an offence to do any of the following:

- supply a banned plastic item
- provide false or misleading information about a banned plastic item
- release, or cause/permit the release, of a balloon

Fines of \$5000 per offence apply.

DWER has engaged the **National Retail Association (NRA)** to help businesses learn more about the ban and understand how to comply.

More information about the ban:

Visit: www.plasticsbanwa.com.au

Call: 1800 817 723

Email: sustainability@nra.net.au

PLASTIC SHOPPING BAGS

(of any thickness)



1 JULY 2022

IMPORTANT: The 2022 ban *replaces* the previous ban on lightweight plastic shopping bags.



BANNED FROM 1 JULY 2022

The ban now applies to **all** plastic shopping bags *with handles* used to convey goods from a business including:

- shopping bags made from plastic film, of any thickness
- paper shopping bags that are plastic laminated
- the above bags used for home delivery or online sales

The ban does **not** apply to:

- plastic bags without handles
- produce bags
- sealed packaging (e.g. bread bags)
- other bags not intended for conveying goods from a retailer (e.g. bags for waste, nappies or dog waste)



ALTERNATIVES

First, consider if you need to supply a bag. You could encourage customers to bring their own, reuse stock boxes or provide trolleys.

Then, consider using reusable bags made from fabrics such as cotton, jute, hessian, bamboo or hemp.

You can also use synthetic fabrics such as nylon, recycled PET, or polypropylene*.

*Non-woven polypropylene bags (like the green bag pictured below) must have stitched seams and a minimum weight of 90 gsm.

Any shopping bag with handles made from plastic or compostable plastic film is banned, regardless of reusability.

Finally, if you need a disposable option, you can use paper bags, but these must not have a plastic or cello laminate.



UTENSILS

straws, stirrers and cutlery



1 JULY 2022



BANNED FROM 1 JULY 2022

The ban applies to:

- disposable plastic straws
- disposable plastic stirrers and swizzle sticks
- disposable plastic forks, spoons, knives, sporks, splayds, chopsticks and food picks.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- utensils used for food preparation or servingware (eg. tongs, cake servers)
- items which arrive to store in pre-packaged food and beverage products (eg. straw attached to juice box).



ALTERNATIVES

First, consider whether you need to provide straws, stirrers or cutlery, especially if many of your customers consume your products at home or the office.

Then, consider reusable utensils such as metal, bamboo, silicone or glass. You could also encourage customers to bring their own reusable utensils which are available in handy kits.

Finally, if you do need disposable alternatives, consider uncoated paper, wood, wheat or bamboo.

Important: Utensils which contain any form of 'plant-based' or compostable plastic are **not** allowed. In particular, most straws and cutlery made from sugarcane or cornstarch contain bioplastics and are therefore banned.

Exemption for straws:

Businesses can supply disposable plastic straws in certain situations to ensure access for people with a disability or medical need.

- Businesses can keep plastic straws out of view and supply a single plastic straw only if a customer requests one as part of food or drink supply. You do not need to ask for a reason and you are not obliged to provide a plastic straw.
- Packs of plastic straws can be supplied by authorised organisations and care facilities ([see list on website](#)).
- Manufacturers can supply plastic straws to clients if they have reasonable grounds to believe they are for the above purposes only.



FOODWARE

plates, bowls and containers (without lids)



1 JULY 2022



BANNED FROM 1 JULY 2022

The ban applies to disposable plastic plates, bowls and containers which:

- are used for food, and
- do not have a lid.

This includes unlidded plates, bowls and containers made from paper which have a plastic coating or lining.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- bowls or containers which have a lid when served (e.g. lidded soup bowls, deli tubs, sauce containers)
- items which arrive to store as part of pre-packaged food and beverage products (eg. plate in frozen meal)
- servingware (e.g. large platters)



ALTERNATIVES

First, consider if customers could bring their own foodware.

Then, consider reusable options such as ceramic, metal, bamboo, glass or thick reusable plastic. If most of your customers dine in-store you could save money and waste by using washable items.

Finally, if you do need disposable alternatives, consider uncoated paper, bamboo, wood or sugarcane pulp.

Important: Unlidded bowls and containers made from paper must be uncoated, or have achieved Australian composting certification if they have a plastic lining or coating. [Learn more.](#)

Items made purely from bioplastic are **not** allowed (even if they are certified).



EXPANDED POLYSTYRENE

food containers and trays



1 JULY 2022



BANNED FROM 1 JULY 2022

The ban applies to:

- disposable takeaway food containers made from expanded polystyrene (EPS) such as clamshells, plates and bowls.
- disposable trays made from EPS (such as fruit/vege trays)

The ban does **not** apply to:

- EPS trays which are solely used for raw meat or seafood
- EPS containers used for business-to-business transport
- EPS items which arrive to store in pre-packaged products (eg. EPS noodle cup, EPS trays packed by farmers)
- EPS cups are not banned at this stage



ALTERNATIVES

For EPS takeaway containers, consider if customers could bring their own takeaway food containers, or if you can introduce reusable options such as ceramic, metal, bamboo or glass containers.

If you do need disposable containers, consider uncoated paper, bamboo, aluminium or sugarcane pulp.

Also be aware of the rules for plates, bowls and containers (previous page).

For EPS trays, such as those used in fruit, vegetable or bakery packaging, consider displaying products without trays or packaging.

You could offer reusable produce bags, or trays made from paper or sugarcane pulp if needed.

You can use EPS trays for raw meat or seafood, however many retailers are switching to more recyclable plastics, such as PET.



BALLOON RELEASES



Banned from 1 July 2022

The ban applies to any person who releases a balloon inflated with gas that causes it to rise in the air, including an adult responsible for a child who releases the balloon or other persons, such as event organisers which permit balloons to be released.

The sale or supply of balloons is not banned or restricted.



CUPS

for cold drinks



1 OCTOBER 2022



BANNED FROM 1 OCTOBER 2022

The ban applies to:

- disposable plastic cups or plastic glasses of any shape which are used for drinks
- disposable paper cups which have a plastic lining
- disposable cups made purely from compostable plastic.

If the cup has a lid you must change the cup, but are not required to change the lid at this stage.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- disposable plastic cups used for drinks higher than room temperature (e.g. coffee cups)
- containers which are used for food (for example, a container for icecream or soup may be called a 'cup' but is defined as a bowl under this ban - see rules for bowls)
- plastic beverage containers such as soft drink bottles



ALTERNATIVES

First, consider if customers could be encouraged to bring their own cups.

Then, consider reusable options such as ceramic, metal, glass or thick reusable plastic. If most customers drink onsite you could save money and waste by using washable items.

You may also like to swap to bottles or cans made from highly recyclable plastic (PET) or metal. Many of these now

offer a 10c refund for recycling at collection points in WA.

Finally, if you do need disposable alternatives, consider uncoated paper, bamboo, wood or sugarcane pulp.

Important: Cups made from paper must be uncoated, or have achieved Australian composting certification if they have a plastic lining or coating.

Items made purely from bioplastic are **not** allowed (even if they are certified).



IMPORTANT: Alternatives made from 'plant-based' plastics are not allowed.

Bioplastics are a form of plastic that has been made from plant-based material, rather than conventional petroleum-based plastics. They are often described as 'plant-based plastic', 'compostable plastic' or 'biodegradable plastic'.

Most of these plastics do not biodegrade as litter or landfill and must be treated in a commercial composting facility.

Bioplastics are included in the ban*.

***Exemption:** bowls, containers and cups which are *primarily made from paperboard* are allowed to have a bioplastic lining *only* if the item has achieved Australian composting certification (either **AS 5810-2010** or **AS 4736-2006**).

If in doubt, ask your supplier for written proof that the items do not contain any form of polymer. It is an offence to provide false or misleading information about banned items.



Steps To Prepare Your Business

1. Plan Ahead

Plan ahead and transition early.

- Assess which items in your range need to change.
- Stop ordering banned items now and use up existing stock.
- Order alternatives and change stock well ahead of the ban deadlines to avoid supply issues.
- If you have large amounts of stock, speak to your supplier as they may accept returns or exchanges.
- You may also be able to transfer excess stock to another state (however be aware of similar bans in other states),
- If you cannot exhaust, return, exchange or transfer your stock in time, contact a local recycler to see if they can take some items.

IMPORTANT: You **cannot** continue to supply banned stock after the ban deadlines, even if you purchased it beforehand.

2. Consider Your Options

Weigh up your best long-term options.

Consumers are increasingly seeking to support sustainable businesses and products.

- **First**, consider whether you need to keep supplying items like straws and cutlery if your customers do not really need them.
- **Next**, think about whether you can use reusable, washable alternatives and reduce the amount of items you give away. Encourage customers to bring their own.
- **Then**, if you still need disposable items, ensure they are compliant and food safe. Check the specific rules for each item as well as banned bioplastics.

If you are unsure about options, check the website or speak to specialists at the National Retail Association. The NRA team can also advise on bans in other states.

3. Speak to your supplier

Ask your supplier to answer these questions **in writing** before you order alternatives:

1. **Do these items comply with the WA plastics legislation that comes into effect in 2022?**
2. **Do these items contain any form of plastic or compostable plastic?**
 - Compostable plastic alternatives are banned for most items.
 - The only exemptions are bowls, containers or cups which are **primarily made from paperboard and have achieved Australian composting certification** (either AS 5810-2010 or AS 4736-2006).

It is an offence to supply banned items, or to provide false or misleading information about a banned item.

4. Inform your Team & Customers

Help your staff prepare for changes.

Prepare your staff for customer questions about the ban and inform them of changes you have decided to make.

Make sure food and beverage staff know that they are allowed to provide an individual plastic straw on request with food or beverages (and do not have to ask for a reason), but must not have these on display.

Inform your customers ahead of time.

Inform your customers of the ban and prepare them for changes you will be implementing. We recommend that suppliers contact their clients and all retailers display signage well ahead of the ban dates so customers have time to adjust.

Signage (including translated signage) is available at: www.plasticsbanwa.com.au

NEED HELP?

The **National Retail Association** is delivering a range of resources and activities to assist businesses and organisations, including a dedicated website, signage, factsheets, retail store visits, information sessions and a tollfree hotline.

For more information or advice:

VISIT
plasticsbanwa.com.au

CALL
1800 817 723

EMAIL
sustainability@nra.net.au

To ensure you're up to date we recommend signing up for updates via the website. Key updates may include information on exemptions, enforcement, answers to common queries and information on stage 2 of the ban as it becomes available.



Scan here to visit
the website for
more information.