

Single-Use Items Reduction Bylaw



Commonly Asked Questions

When do these regulations come into effect?

The regulations have been phased in to allow businesses time to adjust. The distribution of food service ware accessories upon request came into effect on December 5, 2024, and the requirement to use only reusable products for dine-in services will come into effect on March 5, 2026.

Who does this bylaw impact?

The bylaw primarily impacts food and beverage service businesses within the City of Victoria.

Why is this work important?

Over 220,000 single-use items are thrown away in Victoria every day, including cups, containers and utensils. Packaging materials, including single-use items, make up 17 per cent of the material sent to Hartland Landfill.

The excessive distribution and disposal of single-use items throughout the community is an unsustainable activity that directly impacts municipal services, compromises provincial and regional recycling and composting programs, and harms terrestrial and marine environments.

Reducing single-use items is a priority under Zero Waste Victoria, the City's plan to reduce waste by 50 per cent by 2040.

What is reusable food service ware?

Reusable food service ware means plates, bowls, cups, glasses, stirrers, condiment containers, cutlery and other food or beverage service ware that is made of durable materials such as ceramic, aluminum, glass or plastic and designed to be washed, sanitized and used repeatedly in accordance with applicable health and safety regulations.

What does prepackaged food and beverages mean?

Prepackaged food or beverages refers to prepared food or beverages that, prior to sale, are packaged, wrapped or contained in a receptacle or covering and displayed for purchase and consumption by a customer.

Prepackaged items do not include food or beverages prepared on demand.

Does the by-request requirement apply to drive-thru, delivery and mobile app orders?

Yes, the requirement to distribute food service ware accessories only by request applies to food and beverage orders through drive-thru, mobile app and delivery services. Businesses may need to update their online and mobile point-of-sale systems to give customers a way to request accessories.



What if a customer orders food or beverage to dine-in and then requests to have leftovers to-go?

A business should first ask if a customer wishes to consume their food and/or beverage on the premises, e.g., asking if the order is “for here or to go”.

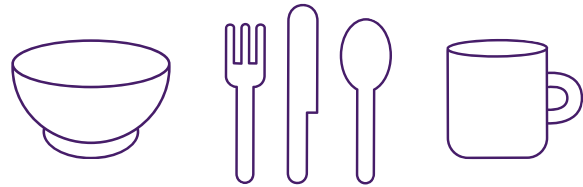
If the customer receives their order for dining on site and then later requests any part of the order to be packaged to go, this would not be in contravention of the bylaw since the original order was served in reusable food service ware for on-site consumption.

Why are reusable products better than compostable and recyclable products?

Reusable products provide benefits when compared to conventional disposable products including waste reduction, environmental harm prevention, costs savings for businesses and consumers, and opportunities for branding and marketing aligned with a growing segment of sustainably minded customers.

What do I need to need to know about additional regulations?

Compostable* plastic containers for prepared food and beverages, as well as compostable plastic film are banned under the Province of B.C.'s Single-Use and Plastic Waste Prevention Regulation.



Additionally, single-use food service ware made from problematic plastics, plastic straws, plastic stir sticks and single-use plastic cutlery is banned under the Federal Single-Use Plastics Prohibition Regulation.

*Paper and plant-fibre food service ware (take-out containers and cups) *lined* with compostable plastic may still be used.

How will the City ensure compliance?

The City's initial focus is on education and awareness about the bylaw while working with businesses to promote compliance.

For those that remain non-compliant, the bylaw states that an individual can be fined between \$50 and \$500, while a corporation can be fined between \$100 and \$10,000 dollars. These amounts are consistent with other City bylaws.

Will there be any businesses that are exempt from these regulations?

Businesses that face insurmountable barriers to sanitizing reusable food ware on-site can apply for an exemption subject to approval by the City.