



Town of Sudbury

Board of Health

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What You Need to Know about the New Sudbury Bylaws Banning Plastic Shopping Bags and Water Bottles

What does the new bylaw say about plastic bags?

- No thin film plastic check-out bags less than 4 mils thick may be distributed by retailers in Sudbury. Check-out bag means a bag provided to a customer at the point of sale.
- *Still allowed:* produce bags, dry cleaning bags, newspaper bags, garbage bags, dog-waste bags, and other thin film plastic products such as plastic wrap.
- All retail businesses are covered by the bylaw. However, the Board of Health requests that *all* business owners refrain from distributing plastic bags.

What does the new bylaw say about paper bags?

- Must be 100 percent recyclable, e.g. no non-recyclable string or ribbon handles, no heavily inked surfaces, no glossy coating.
- Must have at least 40 percent post-consumer recycled content.
- Must be labeled to show that the bag is 100 percent recyclable and is made of 40 percent recycled material.

What does the new bylaw say about reusable bags?

- Must be sewn with stitched handles and designed for multiple uses.
- Constructed to carry 25 pounds over a distance of 300 feet.
- Must be machine washable.
- Must be made of natural fibers or durable, non-toxic plastic (not polyethylene or polyvinyl chloride) that is greater than 4 mils thick.

When does the new bylaw take effect?

- For all stores, the bylaw will take effect on **June 30th, 2018**.

How will the bylaw be enforced?

The Board of Health will enforce the bylaw. Health Department Director Bill Murphy may grant a six month extension for compliance if the law causes undue hardship to a business, or if a business needs more time to draw down an inventory of bags. Businesses not in compliance will initially receive a written warning notice, followed by a \$50 fine for a second violation after the notice, a \$200 fine for a second violation and for any subsequent violations.

Why does the town need a new bylaw for shopping bags?

Plastic bags harm the environment. The bylaw is intended to reduce litter and to ensure that most shopping bags distributed in town can be recycled. The Sudbury Community is committed to long-term public outreach and education to promote reusable bags in Sudbury. Reusable bags are the best solution for our environment. Thirty-seven communities in Massachusetts have now passed laws to regulate plastic bags.

What does the new by-law say about water bottles?

The bylaw prohibits the sale of non-reusable polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles of 1 liter (34 ounces) or less containing noncarbonated, unflavored, drinking water in the Town of Sudbury. Water may be provided for free in any form.

Does this apply to cases of 24 bottles or more?

Yes. Any water bottle 1 liter or less, however packaged, cannot be sold.

What if there is a public health or other declared emergency?

In the event of a declaration of an emergency by the Emergency Management Director, water bottles may be sold until seven days after the declaration.

How will this bylaw be enforced?

The Board of Health will enforce the bylaw. Health Department Director Bill Murphy may grant a six month extension for compliance if the law causes undue hardship to a business, or if a business needs more time to draw down an inventory of bags. Businesses not in compliance will initially receive a written warning notice, followed by a \$25 fine for a second violation after the notice, a \$50 fine for a second violation and for any subsequent violations.

Where can I find out more about the Sudbury bag and bottle bylaw?

Go to our website at: <https://sudbury.ma.us/health/> or

Contact: health@sudbury.ma.us; (978) 440-5480