

Western Australia's

Plan for Plastics

Single-use plastics ban Thick plastic bags

January 2022

From 1 January 2022, regulations to ban the sale, supply and distribution of all soft plastic bags with handles in Western Australia come into effect. This ban extends the current ban on lightweight plastic bags.

Businesses, organisations and consumers who use these items are being supported to switch to reusable and non-plastic alternatives.

Over the next 20 years,
Western Australians are
estimated to use over
1.2 billion thick plastic bags.

Quick
fact

1.2
Billion

► What is being banned?

The ban applies to the sale, supply or distribution of all soft plastic carry (shopping) bags with handles that are made wholly or partly of plastic, such as those commonly used by supermarkets, department stores and retailers to convey food, clothing and shopping items. The ban also includes plastic carry (shopping) bags made from:

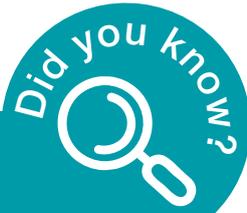


- heat-sealed non-woven polypropylene
- non-woven polypropylene bag with a minimum weight of less than 90 grams per square metre measured as a single layer of fabric.
- 'degradable', 'biodegradable', 'oxo-degradable' and 'compostable' plastic
- plastic laminated paper or cardboard

Why are bioplastics included in the ban?

Bioplastics are made from plant or other organic material instead of hydrocarbon oils. Bioplastics are plastics, and behave the same way as regular plastics in the environment. Bioplastics can contaminate recycling streams and often require separate collection systems and industrial composting conditions to break down.





► What is **not** included in the ban?

Plastic bags that are not included in the current ban are:

- barrier bags (a plastic bag without a handle used to carry unpackaged perishable food) (these will be included in Stage 2 of the bans)
- bags that are an integral part of the packaging in which goods are sealed for sale
- shopping bags made from one or more of the following fabrics (whether or not mixed with a fabric that is not made from plastic):
 - woven polypropylene (whether or not it is insulated for the purpose of keeping items cold)
 - nylon or recycled polyethylene terephthalate (rPET)
- shopping bags made from non-woven polypropylene (whether or not mixed with a fabric that is not made from plastic) if:
 - the bag has sewn, rather than heat-welded, seams
 - the fabric has a minimum weight of 90 grams per square metre measured as a single layer of fabric
- insulated bags designed to keep food purchases cold (e.g. a cooler bag)
- plastic bags provided by a medical provider to a person receiving medical services.

► Who does the ban apply to?

The ban applies to all businesses, manufacturers, retailers, wholesalers and distributors in Western Australia. Community organisations and institutions may also be affected by the ban.

► When do the bans come into effect?

The regulations come into effect from 1 January 2022.

A six-month transition period for thick plastic bags, to 1 July 2022, has been provided to enable everyone to prepare.





► Can I still use thick plastic bags I have at home?

Yes, you can. The ban does not apply to the personal use of the items, only the sale, supply and distribution of them.

► What can I use instead?

There are many options to choose from that are both better for the planet and prevent waste going to landfill. Choose to:

- **Refuse** – simply say ‘No’ to a carry (shopping) bag
- **Reuse** – opt for cost-effective reusable bag options to carry goods and groceries such as reusable bags made from rPET, cotton, canvas, jute or hemp
- **Switch** – Instead of using bags for your shopping consider using boxes, cartons or trolleys.



If you simply can't do without a carry bag and the alternatives are not available, then consider disposable bags made from non-plastic materials such as paper or cardboard made from recycled or sustainably sourced paper.

► When do penalties apply?

From **1 July 2022** penalties apply for the sale, supply or distribution of plastic bags that are banned under the Environmental Protection (Prohibited Plastics and Balloons) Regulations 2018.

Penalties also apply to any person who supplies or manufactures for supply in Western Australia thick plastic bags and knowingly provides false or misleading information about its composition or whether or not it is a banned thick plastic bag.

► Need more information

Call the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation: 08 6364 7000

Email: plastic-action@dwer.wa.gov.au

Check out the website:
[Western Australia's Plan for Plastics | Western Australian Government](#)
(www.wa.gov.au)

