

LITTLE
RIPPLES MAKE
BIG CHANGE

Compostable Plastics



SINGLE-USE & PLASTIC WASTE PREVENTION REGULATION

gov.bc.ca/reuse

What are compostable plastics? Most compostable plastics are made by processing plant-based materials, like corn starch or sugar cane. These plastics need specific conditions to break down. In B.C., they often can't be composted or recycled, and end up in our landfills or environment.

What you need to know

As of December 20, 2023, B.C. businesses are restricted from selling or distributing single-use (disposable) utensils that contain compostable plastic.

PROHIBITED AS OF 2023



Starting July 15, 2024, prohibited items will include compostable plastic items, such as take-out containers and shopping bags.

PROHIBITED AS OF JULY 15, 2024



What you need to do

As of December 20, 2023:

1. Stop using plastic utensils

Don't provide customers with single-use plastic, including compostable plastic, knives, forks, spoons, chopsticks, stir sticks or splash plugs.

As of July 15, 2024:

2. Stop using plastic shopping bags

Don't provide customers with single-use plastic bags, including compostable plastic bags, at the checkout.

3. Stop using plastic food service ware

Don't pack food or drinks you prepare for immediate consumption (including take-out or delivery) in single-use compostable plastic containers or packaging.

Why are compostable plastics being restricted?

- ▶ Compostable plastics, including items labelled as compostable plastic, are not currently allowed to be composted in B.C.
- ▶ These plastics often don't break down properly and do not contribute to high-quality, environmentally beneficial compost.
- ▶ When mixed with materials for recycling, compostable plastics limit the recycling of other plastics.
- ▶ In B.C., these plastics are regularly removed from composting and recycling facilities and sent to landfills.
- ▶ Until these products can be easily composted at B.C.'s composting facilities, we are encouraging use of reusable items.
- ▶ When single-use plastics are required, easily recyclable plastics such as plastics labeled as PET#1, HDPE #2, LDPE #4, PP #5, are preferred.
- ▶ These products may be considered in the future if they are designed and proven to readily break down in B.C.'s existing infrastructure.
- ▶ Bin liners for compost will still be available.

These items are exempt under the regulation, and may continue to be used.

EXEMPTIONS



Paper and plant-fibre food service ware (like take-out containers and cups) lined with compostable plastic



Compostable plastic film wrap used to package food not meant for immediate consumption, such as raw meat and blocks of cheese



Some food service accessories, like cup lids (but not utensils)



Packaging used for prepared food and drinks made for sale or distribution outside of B.C.

This fact sheet is part of a toolkit produced to help B.C. businesses comply with the regulation.

Looking for options to single-use plastics? Find our handy alternatives guide, plus fact sheets on other restricted items and additional printable tools – including posters and signs that you can use to inform your staff and customers – at gov.bc.ca/reuse.



Through the Single-Use and Plastic Waste Prevention Regulation, B.C. is phasing out many hard-to-recycle single-use plastic items – reducing waste, protecting our environment, and creating a cleaner future for all British Columbians.



Ministry of
Environment and
Climate Change Strategy