



*The City of Moab has adopted an ordinance prohibiting the distribution of single-use plastic bags. This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) guide is intended to answer questions business owners may have about the upcoming implementation of the ban.*

## **Plastic Bag Ban Frequently Asked Questions Information for Retailers**

### **When are retailers required to stop providing plastic single-use carryout bags to customers?**

January 1, 2019

### **What is the purpose or end result of this legislation?**

The goal is to reduce the use of throwaway plastic products, particularly lightweight plastic bags, which are a litter problem and escape into waterways and oceans where they are harmful to animals and may enter the food chain as they degrade into smaller and smaller – but still plastic – pieces. The ban is another step toward the City meeting its goals as established in its “2020 Vision: A Sustainable Moab Plan,” which was passed by Council in 2008.

### **What plastic bags are prohibited?**

Those considered “single-use” and “carryout” are prohibited. This includes all plastic bags less than 2.25 mils (0.00225 inches) thick provided at checkout or point of sale. Those not allowed are the typical plastic bags with handles constructed of thin plastic (less than 2.25 mils thick). Bags constructed of durable plastic (equal to or thicker than 2.25 mils) are considered reusable and are allowed.

### **Can retailers provide paper bags?**

Retailers may provide customers with paper bags made of at least 40% recycled paper. These bags are available from wholesalers and online companies.

### **Are retailers required to provide reusable plastic or paper bags?**

No, retailers may choose to provide either or both. If they provide plastic bags, they must be at least 2.25 mils thick to be considered “reusable.”

### **Can restaurants provide single-use plastic bags to their customers?**

No, restaurants must follow the same requirements as other retailers.

### **What businesses are affected?**

All retail establishments must comply with the new requirements, including grocery stores, retail shops, hardware stores, pharmacies, restaurants, and convenience stores located within the Moab city limits.

### **Are small retail businesses exempt?**

No, all Moab city businesses must meet the requirements of this ordinance.

### **Can retailers provide “reusable” plastic or cloth bags?**

Yes, retailers may provide reusable bags made out of durable materials specifically designed and manufactured for multiple reuse. Reusable plastic bags are those that are at least 2.25 mils thick. The Moab Area Travel Council will be providing a limited number of bags to local hotels to reduce costs to retailers. The Moab City Sustainability Director has also conducted research to identify reusable bags that can be purchased in bulk at a lower cost. For more information, retailers can contact the City Sustainability Director at [rrosso@moabcity.org](mailto:rrosso@moabcity.org).

### **Can retailers provide plastic bags for meat, produce, and bulk foods and items?**

Yes, plastic bags used inside stores for bulk foods and other items will still be allowed. Only “single-use” plastic bags used for “carryout” are prohibited.

#### **The following types of plastic bags are allowed for the described uses:**

- Meat, produce and bakery bags;
- Laundry or dry cleaning;
- Newspaper and door-hanger bags;
- Pet waste, yard waste and garbage bags;
- Bags provided by pharmacists or veterinarians to contain prescription drugs or other medical necessities, as required by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA);
- Bags for items sold in bulk such as bulk food and bulk hardware items;
- Bags or plastic wraps for flowers, potted plants or items where dampness may be an issue;
- Bags of any type that a customer brings to the store for his or her own use to carry away goods that are not placed in a bag provided by the store;
- Bags comprised of recyclable plastic, with a minimum thickness of 2.25 mils.

### **Do the requirements prohibit retailers from selling plastic bags such as garbage bags and pet waste bags?**

No, the requirements only apply to bags provided to customers at check out to carry away purchased items. Bags sold in packages containing multiple bags are not prohibited.

### **Can retailers provide plastic bags made of compostable materials?**

Not if they are less than 2.25 mils thick.

### **Will there be a “grace period” for retailers to comply?**

The Moab City Manager may issue an extension for a retail establishment that has a large supply of bags already in stock and will be unable to use them before January 1, 2019. Business owners should contact the City Manager to request an extension.

### **What are the penalties for not complying with these new requirements?**

Violations of the ordinance can result in a fine of up to \$250 for each instance of violation.

### **What is the plan for informing retailers?**

Information will be posted on the Moab City website, and outreach has been done through local news media, social media and by other means. A letter or postcard will also be sent to retailers in November to remind them of the upcoming change. A downloadable, printable poster reminding shoppers to bring their bags will also be available for retailers through the City website at [moabcity.org/bagban](http://moabcity.org/bagban).

### **Are there any restrictions on retailers choosing to charge a fee for bags?**

No, there are no requirements. This decision is up to the business.