

# Coming soon to Walpole: A Single-Use Plastic Bag Ban



On May 1, Walpole Town Meeting approved an article banning thin film single use plastic bags with handles at point of sale due to the negative implications of these bags on the environment. Walpole joins 142 other cities and towns in Massachusetts that have approved this ban. The article was forwarded to the Attorney General's Office for approval in mid-May. They have 90 days to review it. If approved it goes into effect around September 1.

## What does this mean for the consumer?

After the law goes into effect, large businesses will have six months and small businesses will have one year to phase out single-use plastic checkout bags. Please bring your reusable bags to stores as stores can charge for reusable bags. Excluded from this ban are dry cleaner, newspaper, pet waste, meat and produce bags. Free reusable bags are available at the Walpole Recycles booth at the Walpole Farmer's market on Saturday mornings.

## What does this mean for your business?

If you are like the majority of businesses in Walpole that use paper bags, you are all set. If your business is over 3500 square feet you have six months from Attorney General approval, under 3500 square feet you have one year to stop using thin film single use plastic bags at point of sale. A six month hardship-extension is available upon request.

## Who enforces the single use plastic bag ban?

The Walpole Board of Health is the enforcement agent and they will check for compliance when they go out for Health inspections. They will also respond to noncompliance complaints. Fines can be assessed, but the experience of other towns has shown that fines were not necessary due to high compliance rates.

## Who do I contact if I have a question?

The Walpole Board of Health is your point of contact.

**Website:** [www.walpole-ma.gov/board-of-health](http://www.walpole-ma.gov/board-of-health) has details about the law

**Email:** [walpolebagban@gmail.com](mailto:walpolebagban@gmail.com) (for bag-ban specific questions)

Additional information can also be found on the Walpole Recycles Facebook page.