

# Beverly Hills Plastic Bag Ban Begins July 1

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Beverly Hills is the latest city to ban plastic carryout bags. (Thinkstock)

It was only a matter of time before Beverly Hills followed suit with its neighbors and enacted a plastic bag ban.

The Beverly Hills City Council unanimously approved April 22 the second reading of an ordinance prohibiting the sale of plastic carryout bags at certain stores within the municipality. Also regulated under the ordinance are paper carryout bags.

While plastic bags will ultimately be prohibited at every store in Beverly Hills that falls under the City law, paper bags will be available to those who do not have reusable bags for 10 cents each.

Stores must make reusable bags available to all customers, though it is up to individual retailers to offer them for free or at a cost.

The ordinance does regulate how stores complying with the plastic bag ban allocate any money made from the paper bag fee or sale of reusable bags. Specifically, stores must use such money to comply with the ordinance, deflect the cost of providing paper bags, or provide shoppers with educational materials to encourage the use of reusable bags.

Certain stores will have to begin complying with the new City law by July 1. Others will begin following the law as of Jan. 1, 2015.

Specifically, any retail store with gross annual sales of \$2 million or more and sells a line of dry groceries or canned goods or other perishables, or is at least 10,000 square feet in size are not allowed to give its customers plastic bags as of July 1.

Convenient food stores, drug stores, grocery stores, pharmacies, supermarkets, and other related retailers have until Jan. 1, 2015 to comply with the plastic bag ban.

Also given until Jan. 1, 2015, are those retail stores with gross annual sales of less than \$2 million and selling a line of dry groceries or canned goods or other perishables.

If a store does not comply with the plastic bag ban ordinance, it could be subject to fines as high as \$500 for every day a violation occurs and is allowed to continue.

City officials are expected to allocate \$4,000 in marketing and outreach efforts to inform residents of the plastic bag ban and to issue reusable bags.

Similar plastic bag bans are already in place in Culver City, the City and County of Los Angeles, Malibu, and Santa Monica.

According to news reports, a statewide ban on plastic bags is set to go in effect July 2015.