



<http://paloaltoonline.com/news/print/2013/10/30/restaurant-bag-ban-starts-friday>

Uploaded: Wed, Oct 30, 2013, 9:49 am

Restaurant bag ban starts Friday

Bags for containers of soup and stews will still be allowed in Palo Alto

by Eric Van Susteren

Plastic to-go bags at Palo Alto restaurants are going to go as of Friday, Nov. 1, when the third phase of Palo Alto's ordinance banning plastic bags takes effect.

Restaurants and food-service establishments will no longer be able to give out single-use plastic to-go bags.

Implementation of the ordinance began in 2009 in grocery stores and was expanded to all retail establishments in July. It still allows plastic bags without handles to be used to hold individual containers of soups or stews if the container itself isn't enough to prevent spilling.

As of Friday, customers can instead use a paper bag, provided by the restaurant at no cost, use no bag or place the food in their own reusable bag, a City of Palo Alto press release stated.

"Plastic to-go bags from food-service establishments are regularly found in local creeks," said Ken Torke, acting assistant director for Public Works' environmental-services division. "We have started to see a reduction of retail bags in creeks just since July, and we are optimistic that this phase of the ordinance will do even more to reduce bag litter on streets and in creeks."

Nearly 60 percent fewer plastic checkout bags than last year were found during a September Coast Clean-up day at Adobe Creek, according to the city.

Palo Alto is the second city on the Peninsula to ban plastic to-go bags from restaurants. San Francisco had a similar ordinance that went into effect Oct. 1. Santa Cruz County implemented an ordinance for restaurants in its unincorporated areas in April.

Palo Alto officials recommend people keep reusable bags by the door of their home, in their car or near keys. They also suggest keeping foldable bags in pockets, backpacks and purses to remember where they are.

Residents can get answers to frequently asked questions at www.cityofpaloalto.org/bags or by calling 650-329-2598.