



**BOARD OF HEALTH**  
100 MAPLE AVENUE  
SHREWSBURY, MASSACHUSETTS 01545  
Telephone: 508-841-8384

April 21, 2023

**RE: Plastic Bag Reduction Bylaw and Polystyrene Reduction Bylaw**

To the Shrewsbury Community:

The purpose of this communication is to remind all residents and businesses that these two bylaws are in place and remain in force.

**Plastic Bag Reduction Bylaw – Effective July 1, 2017**

The Shrewsbury bylaw prohibits retail establishments from providing customers with plastic checkout bags that are not compostable and marine degradable. Thin-film plastic bags used to contain newspapers, dry-cleaning, produce, meat, cheese, bulk foods and other similar merchandise would be exempt.

**Polystyrene Reduction Bylaw – Effective January 1, 2020**

The Polystyrene Reduction Bylaw was adopted at a Special Town Meeting in October of 2018 and went into effect on January 1, 2020. In summary, this bylaw was fashioned to promote safe, reusable, and sustainable alternatives. It will also enhance both public and environmental health and reduce waste management issues.

If you have questions, please contact the Shrewsbury Health Department at 508-841-8384.

Stephen A. Vigeant  
Chairman

Jennie Fishman, MPH  
Member

Dr. George Abraham  
Member

**Shrewsbury Board of Health**



**Town of Shrewsbury  
Plastic Bag Reduction By-law  
Effective July 1, 2017**



**Clean & Green Shrewsbury**

**What Does This Regulation Really Mean? Bring Your Own Bag (BYOB)**

Any retail establishment including: restaurants, mobile food or ice cream trucks, convenience stores, retail stores, department stores, hardware stores, general merchandise stores, pharmacies, or supermarkets who provide plastic checkout or carry-out bags to customers. Thin-film plastic bags used to contain dry cleaning, newspapers, produce, meat, cheese, bulk foods, wet items, and other similar merchandise, typically without handles, up to point of sale are permissible but they shall not be used as carryout bags to customers.

Plastic carryout shopping bags, if used, must:

(1) Conform to the current ASTM D7081 standard specification for marine degradability and is certified and labeled as meeting the ASTM D7081 standard specification as such by a recognized verification entity;

or

(2) Conforms to the current ASTM D6400 standard specification for compostability and is certified and labeled as Meeting the ASTM D6400 standard specification as such by a recognized verification entity.



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# PLASTIC BAG REDUCTION BY-LAW

## SECTION 1

**“Director”**: the Director of Public Health or the Town Manager / Board of Selectman designee. **“ASTM D6400”**: the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) International “Standard Specification for Compostable Plastics”.

**“ASTM D7081”**: ASTM International “Standard Specification for Biodegradable Plastics in the Marine Environment”.

**“Checkout bag”**: a carryout bag provided by a store to a customer at the point of sale. Checkout bags shall not include bags, whether plastic or not, in which loose produce or products are placed by the consumer to deliver such items to the point of sale or check-out area of the store.

**“Compostable plastic bag”**: a plastic bag that:

- (1) Conforms to the current ASTM D6400 for compostability;
- (2) Is certified and labeled as meeting the ASTM D6400 standard specification by a recognized verification entity.
- (3) Conforms to any other standards deemed acceptable by this section.

**“Department”**: the Shrewsbury Department of Public Health.

**“Marine degradable plastic bag”**: a plastic bag that conforms to the current ASTM D7081 standard specification for marine degradability; and conforms to any other standards deemed acceptable by the Director, provided additional, Director-approved standards are as stringent as ASTM D7081.

**“Recyclable Paper Bag”**: means a paper bag that is:

- (1) 100% recyclable.
- (2) Contains at least 40% post-consumer recycled paper content.
- (3) Displays the percentage of post-consumer recycled content in a visible manner on the outside of the bag.

**“Reusable check-out bag”**: a bag with sewn handles that is specifically designed for multiple reuse, can carry 25 pounds over a distance of 300 feet; and is either:

- (1) Made of cloth or other machine washable fabric.
- (2) Made of durable plastic that is 4.00 mils thick;

or

- (3) Made of other durable material.

**“Retail establishment”**, any retail space located in the Town of Shrewsbury including without limitation a restaurant, mobile food or ice cream truck, convenience store, retail pharmacy, or supermarket.

## SECTION 2

If a retail establishment as defined in SECTION 1 provides plastic checkout bags to customers, the plastic bags shall comply with the requirements of being compostable plastic bags, as well as marine degradable plastic bags. Thin-film plastic bags used to contain dry cleaning, newspapers, produce, meat, cheese, bulk foods, wet items and other similar merchandise, typically without handles, are permissible.

## SECTION 3

- (a) Nothing in this section shall be read to preclude any establishment from making reusable checkout bags available for sale to customers or utilizing recyclable paper bags as defined in this section at checkout.

- (b) The Director may promulgate rules and regulations to implement this section.
- (c) Each Retail Establishment as defined in SECTION 1, located in the Town of Shrewsbury shall comply with this by-law.

- (1) If it is determined that a violation has occurred the Director shall issue a warning notice to the Retail Establishment for the initial violation.
- (2) If an additional violation of this by-law has occurred within one year after a warning notice has been issued for an initial violation, the Director shall issue a notice of violation and shall impose a penalty against the retail establishment.
- (3) The penalty for each violation that occurs after the issuance of the warning notice shall be no more than:
  - (a) \$50 for the second offense paid with 21 days to the Department of Health.
  - (b) \$100 for the third offense and all subsequent offenses.
- (4) No more than one (1) penalty shall be imposed upon a Retail Establishment within a seven (7) calendar day period.
- (5) A Retail Establishment shall have fifteen (15) calendar days after the date that a notice of violation is issued to pay the penalty.
- (6) All subsequent offenses may be penalized by a non-criminal disposition as provided in the General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 21D.

All of the requirements set forth in this by-law shall take effect July 1, 2017. In the event that compliance with the effective date of this by-law is not feasible for a food service establishment because of either unavailability of alternative checkout bags or economic hardship, the Director may grant a waiver of not more than six (6) months upon application of the owner or the owner's representative. The waiver may be extended for one (1) additional six month (6) period upon showing of continued infeasibility as set forth above.



A recyclable "**Paper Bag**" means a paper bag that is:

- (1) 100% recyclable.
- (2) Contains at least 40% post-consumer recycled paper content.
- (3) Displays the percentage of postconsumer recycled content in a visible manner on the outside of the bag.

## Questions?

Call – 508-841-8951 or Email - [solidwasterecycling@shrewsburyma.gov](mailto:solidwasterecycling@shrewsburyma.gov)

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## BUILDING A HEALTHIER SHREWSBURY

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A Summary of the Town of Shrewsbury's

# Polystyrene Reduction Bylaw



Regulating the use of Polystyrene Foam Disposable Food Service Ware  
by Food Service Establishments in the Town of Shrewsbury

**The Town of Shrewsbury's Polystyrene Reduction Bylaw was enacted for the following reasons:**

- Polystyrene foam (commonly referred to as Styrofoam, a Dow Chemical Company trademarked form of polystyrene foam insulation) is a common environmental pollutant and non-biodegradable substance commonly used as food service ware.
- Polystyrene foam is non-renewable, non-recyclable, and non-compostable.
- Environmental Protection Agency has found that the polystyrene manufacturing process is the fifth largest creator of hazardous waste in the United States.
- Alternative cost-effective biodegradable, compostable and/or reusable food service ware is readily available. Such alternatives are less toxic and more environmentally friendly than polystyrene foam.
- Use of biodegradable, compostable food, and/or re-useable service ware will reduce the waste stream and reduce waste costs.

**What does this bylaw enforce?**

The Polystyrene Reduction Bylaw bans all food service establishments from using Expanded Polystyrene foam (commonly referred to as Styrofoam) when preparing, selling or providing food and beverages in the Town of Shrewsbury.

**Who does this bylaw apply to?**

**Food Service Establishments**

**What is the Effective Date?**

**January 1, 2020**

**Examples of unacceptable products:**

**Expanded Polystyrene**



**NOT ACCEPTABLE**

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**Examples of acceptable products:**

- Plastics made from non-expanded Polystyrene (preferably recyclable and compostable)
- Paper products (preferably recyclable and compostable)
- Cardboard (preferably recyclable and compostable)
- Metal and aluminum foil (preferably recyclable)
- Glass (preferably recyclable)

Products made from non-expanded Polystyrene may be used. Products that are recycled, recyclable and compostable are preferable. For a list of products that are certified compostable, visit the Biodegradable Products Institute website: <http://products.bpiworld.org/>



**ACCEPTABLE**

## DEFINITIONS

**"Director"** - the Director of Public Health Services or the Town Manager / Board of Selectmen designee.

**"Disposable Food Service Container"** - means single-use disposable products for serving or transporting prepared, ready-to consume food or beverages, including without limitation, take-out foods and/or leftovers from partially consumed meals prepared by a food establishment. This includes but not limited to plates, cups, bowls, trays, hinged or lidded containers, straws, cup lids, or utensils. It does not include single-use disposable packaging for unprepared foods.

**"Food Service Establishment "** – means any operation that stores, prepares, packages, serves, vends, or otherwise provides food for human consumption, as further defined in 105 CMR 590.002. Any establishment requiring a permit to operate in accordance with the State Food Code, 105 CMR 590.000, et. seq., shall be considered a food establishment for purposes of this ordinance.

**"Expanded Polystyrene"** - means blown Polystyrene (Polystyrene that has been expanded or "blown" using a gaseous blowing agent into a solid foam) and expanded and extruded forms, which are thermoplastic petrochemical materials utilizing a styrene monomer and processed by any number of techniques including but not limited to fusion of polymer spheres (expandable bead Polystyrene), injection molding, form molding, and extrusion blow molding (extruded from Polystyrene).

**"Prepared Food"** - means any food or beverage prepared on the food establishment's premises, using any cooking or food preparation technique. Prepared food does not include any raw uncooked meat, fish or eggs unless provided for consumption without further food preparation. Prepared food may be eaten on or off the food establishment's premises.