



## What You Need to Know About the New Wellesley Bylaw on Shopping Bags

### What does the new bylaw say about plastic bags?

- No thin film plastic check-out bags less than 4 mils thick may be distributed by retailers in Wellesley. Check-out bag means a bag provided to a customer at the point of sale.
- *Still allowed:* produce bags, dry cleaning bags, newspaper bags, garbage bags, dog-waste bags, and other thin film plastic products such as plastic wrap.
- Non-retail businesses such as medical or dental offices are not covered by the bylaw. However, the NRC requests that *all* business owners refrain from distributing plastic bags, which are no longer collected for recycling at the Wellesley Recycling & Disposal Facility.

### What does the new bylaw say about paper bags?

- Must be 100 percent recyclable, e.g. no non-recyclable string or ribbon handles, no heavily inked surfaces, no glossy coating.
- Must have at least 40 percent post-consumer recycled content.
- Must be labeled to show that the bag is 100 percent recyclable and is made of 40 percent recycled material.

### What does the new bylaw say about reusable bags?

- Must be sewn with stitched handles and designed for multiple uses.
- Must be machine washable.
- Must be made of natural fibers or durable, non-toxic plastic (not polyethylene or polyvinyl chloride) that is greater than 4 mils thick.

### When does the new bylaw take effect?

- For stores 3,500 square feet or larger, the bylaw will take effect on **January 25, 2017**.
- For stores smaller than 3,500 square feet, the bylaw takes effect on **April 12, 2017**.

### How will the bylaw be enforced?

The Board of Health will enforce the bylaw. Health Department Director Lenny Izzo may grant a six-month extension for compliance if the law causes undue hardship to a business, or if a business needs more time to draw down an inventory of bags. Businesses not in compliance will initially receive a written warning notice, followed by a \$50 fine for a first violation after the notice, a \$100 fine for a second violation and for any subsequent violations.

### Why does the town need a new bylaw for shopping bags?

Plastic bags harm the environment and are no longer accepted at the Wellesley Recycling & Disposal Facility. The bylaw is intended to reduce litter and to ensure that most shopping bags distributed in town can be recycled at the RDF. The NRC is committed to long-term public outreach and education to promote reusable bags in Wellesley. Reusable bags are the best solution for our environment. Thirty-six communities in Massachusetts have now passed laws to regulate plastic bags.

### Where can I find out more about the Wellesley bag bylaw?

Go to our website at <http://www.wellesleyma.gov/NRC> or Contact: [nrc@wellesleyma.gov](mailto:nrc@wellesleyma.gov); (781) 431-1019, ext. 2294