

Ban on lightweight plastic bags in Western Australia

Frequently Asked Questions

When does the bag ban come into effect?

The ban on lightweight plastic bags begins on **1 July 2018**.

What bags are banned?

The plastic bag ban includes all lightweight plastic bags with handles, 35 microns thick, or less (including degradable, biodegradable and compostable plastic bags).

Who does the ban apply to?

ALL retailers in Western Australia including food retailers, market stall holders and organisations that supply lightweight plastic shopping bags.

Can a retailer supply lightweight degradable, biodegradable or compostable plastic bags?

No. Degradable, biodegradable and compostable lightweight bags are included in the ban.

Degradable bags break up into smaller pieces of plastic (microplastics) and can be eaten by animals.

Biodegradable and compostable bags persist in the environment for long periods and do not break down in temperatures below 50 degrees – conditions not found in the environment for prolonged periods of time.

Does the ban apply to online sales?

Yes. The ban applies to plastic bags supplied with online purchases sourced in Western Australia.

What can I use instead of plastic bags when I go shopping?

Take reusable bags to the shops—for example hessian bags, green (non-woven polypropylene) bags, insulated cooler bags. Use a cardboard box, a paper bag, load up your pram or bike basket or put the contents of your shopping trolley straight into the car.

How can I remember to take my reusable bags to the shop with me?

- ▶ Put your reusable bags back in your car or by the door as soon as you put away your shopping.
- ▶ Write **bags** on top of your shopping list.
- ▶ Put a reminder note on the door you go out when you head to the shops.
- ▶ Put a note on your steering wheel, to remind you to grab your bags as you leave the car.
- ▶ Prepare for that unexpected shop—carry one or two foldable bags in your handbag, backpack, in your pram or bike basket.

I use plastic shopping bags as bin liners. What are the alternatives?

Consider lining your bin with newspaper or simply washing your bin after emptying it.

You can wrap your organic waste in newspaper and put in the freezer until bin collection day.

Purpose-made bin liner bags will still be available for sale.

Can I still use plastic bags without handles typically used as fruit and vegetable bags or barrier bags?

Yes. These bags are not affected by the ban.

Can I still use 'dog poo' bags?

Yes. These bags are not affected by the ban.

Are nappy bags being banned?

No. You will still be able to purchase these.

To reduce your reliance on single-use plastic, consider wrapping used nappies up in newspaper, before placing in your bin.

What about the use of plastic bags for medical purposes?

Medical care providers – except optometrists and pharmacists – can continue to use lightweight plastic bags to provide goods to their patients or to dispose of medical waste, e.g. used bandages.

Can I still use heavier-weight plastic bags typically used by department stores?

Yes. Heavier-weight plastic bags are designed to be used multiple times.

Some retailers may have heavier weight plastic bags for sale.

Can I take the lightweight bags I have stored at home to the shops to put my shopping in?

Yes. It will only be illegal for a retailer to **sell or supply** a lightweight plastic bag after 1 July 2018.

Can I continue to use lightweight bags I have stored at home as bin liners after 1 July 2018?

Yes. It will only be illegal for a retailer to **sell or supply** a lightweight plastic bag after 1 July 2018.

What difference will this ban really make?

More than 670 million lightweight plastic bags were used in Western Australia in 2017 and of these approximately seven million were littered.

Lightweight plastic bags are easily blown by the wind, littering streets, parks and waterways. When they enter the ocean they endanger wildlife.

Plastic bags also break up into small fragments (microplastics) and can be ingested by marine and land animals, entering the human food chain.



whatsyourbagplan.wa.gov.au