

Tips for Establishments to Ease the Transition to the New Plastics Bylaws

The bylaws passed at the May 2016 Town Meeting designed to reduce the use of thin-film plastic shopping bags and polystyrene drink and food containers go into effect May 12, 2017.

Several Lee businesses (and many elsewhere) have made the transition, which need not be disruptive. The changes called for are straightforward, but here are some tips for trouble-free implementation.

- Encourage your customers to use reusable bags and containers (success here means lower costs for you and less storage space taken up with bags).
- If you already sell reusable bags, ensure they comply with the bag bylaw. If you don't sell them, consider doing so (again, making sure they're compliant) or contact the Lee Greener Gateway Committee to explore selling its bags. You can also use the inserts we created to promote bag safety and longevity (just contact Committee Chair Peter Hofman).
- At check out, ask customers if they need a plastic bag, rather than automatically giving them out (this will save you money and remind customers about bringing their own bags).
- If you have bulk produce, put signs up where there are dry items encouraging customers not to bag them (this will also save you money; since people wash these items at home, there's no harm in skipping these bags).
- Manage your inventory of non-compliant bags and containers so that you have none left when the bylaws go into effect (this will save you money and you can switch over early if need be).
- Start researching alternatives for the products you use that the bylaws regulate (produce/bulk bags, reusable and paper bags, and foam and rigid polystyrene containers); the Lee Board of Health-approved list of alternatives – posted at www.tritownhealth.org – is a good place to start.
- Encourage your suppliers not to use polystyrene containers for pre-packaged items (if you can't avoid them, put up signs suggesting it's safer if people don't heat their food in these containers – customers will appreciate your concern).
- In addition, if you're a lodging establishment, inform guests of the bylaws when they're making reservations (they'll appreciate the advance notice).

For more information about the bylaws, please visit www.tritownhealth.org or the Committee's section of the Town's website (www.lee.ma.us). If you can't find what you're looking for, please contact:

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*Formerly the Lee Recycling Committee