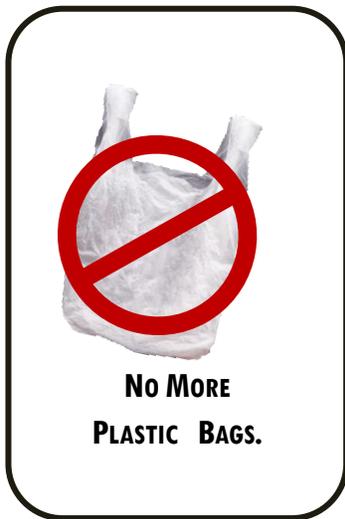




**Town of Los Gatos
Single-Use Carry-Out Bag Ordinance
Starting February 3, 2014**

FAQs for Customers



What is Los Gatos' Bag Ordinance?

Starting February 3, 2014, retail establishments may no longer distribute single-use plastic carry-out bags and must charge a minimum of ten cents for paper or reusable bags.

Why is the Town of Los Gatos restricting single-use plastic carry-out bags?

The Ordinance has been adopted by the Town of Los Gatos to decrease the number of bags going to landfill, reduce litter in the local waterways, and save money on litter and storm drain cleanup. It also helps the Town meet the trash requirements of the regional Municipal Stormwater Permit issued by the Regional Water Quality Control Board.

The Ordinance would help reduce unnecessary waste, contamination in recycling and composting programs, and litter, all of which is costly to taxpayers, as well as harmful to marine life. A single-use carry-out bag ordinance encourages customers to bring their own bags in order to reduce the impact of disposable bags to the County and the environment.

Ordinances have proven effective in other cities. After one year, San Jose found an 89% reduction in bag litter in storm drains, 60% reduction in bags found on streets and neighborhoods, and the use of reusable bags increased from 4% to 62%.

How can I avoid paying 10 cents per bag?

Remember to bring reusable bags to the store or decline a bag when making a purchase.

Will the charge for paper bags increase from 10 cents?

Businesses are required to charge a minimum of 10 cents per paper or reusable bag during the first year of the ordinance. After January 1, 2015, the minimum charge will increase to 25 cents.

Who keeps the charge for paper and reusable bags distributed at the point of sale?

The charge is kept entirely by each store to offset the costs of the paper or reusable bags. The charge is not subject to tax per the California State Board of Equalization.

What about produce bags?

Plastic or paper product bags without handles as defined in the ordinance to carry produce, bulk items, meat, etc. to the checkout stand can be used without charge, although reusable options are encouraged and are available for sale in many locations.

How can I remember by bags?

- Keep reusable bags by the door, in your car or near your keys.
- Keep foldable bags in pockets, backpacks and purses.

How will this ordinance help the environment?

The County of San Mateo Reusable Bag Ordinance Environmental Impact Report estimates the volume of current bag usage within San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties at 552 million per year, including Los Gatos at approximately 16 million. With the ordinance in effect, it is anticipated that 95 percent of the volume would be replaced by a combination of paper (30 percent) and reusable bags (65 percent) each year reducing pollution and landfill waste (*County of San Mateo Reusable Bag Ordinance Environmental Impact Report, August 2012*).

How will the ordinance affect low-income residents?

Customers participating in supplemental food programs such as WIC, CalFresh or SNAP (formerly food stamps) are exempt from the bag charge.



To Learn More visit www.LosGatosCA.gov/ReusableBags
or contact the Town of Los Gatos at 408.354.6832