

Newton, MA
Plastic Reduction

Food Establishment Webinar

January 30, 2024

Alan Gordon



Plastic Reduction Ordinance

Reminder: existing items banned in Newton

- Plastic bags
- Plastic drink stirrers
- Polystyrene foam

New ordinance

- Ordinance passed unanimously at city council September 2023
- Signed by the mayor October 2023
- Goes into effect March 1, 2024
- Prepared food in containers that are reusable, compostable, or recyclable
- Accessories may be provided only upon request or at self-service stations
- Reusable food and beverage serviceware is to be used for dine-in customers
- Additional items not relevant to food establishments

Plastic Reduction Ordinance

Items impacting food establishments

- Food establishments are prohibited from dispensing prepared food to any consumer in dishware and containers larger than 4 ounces that are not reusable, compostable, or recyclable. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, dishware and containers made from black plastic, foam polystyrene, or paper lined with polyethylene or other petroleum-based plastic.
- Food establishments may not automatically provide single use accessories, including in takeout orders, whether orders are placed online, via phone, or in person. Such single use accessories may be provided only upon the request of the consumer either directly or in response to an inquiry by the food establishment. Single use accessories may not be prepackaged in sets. In addition, food establishments may have single use accessories available at self-service stations.
- Full service food establishments shall utilize only reusable food and beverage serviceware for dine-in customers.

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Items impacting food establishments

- ...prepared food....dishware and containers larger than 4 ounces that are not reusable, compostable, or recyclable...
 - *“Prepared food” means any food or beverages, which are served, packaged, cooked, chopped, sliced, mixed, brewed, frozen, squeezed or otherwise prepared on the premises where the food or beverages are to be served. For the purposes of this Section 12-72, prepared food does not include raw, butchered meats, fish and/or poultry sold from a butcher case or similar retail appliance.*
- Containers 4 ounces or smaller (i.e. something you might put salad dressing in, or a special sauce) are not recyclable
- Understand the definitions of “reusable”, “compostable”, and “recyclable”

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- *“Reusable” refers to food and beverage serviceware that will be used multiple times in its same form by a food establishment. Such products are intended to be washed multiple times in a commercial dishwasher and to retain their form and function over multiple usage and washing cycles.*
- *“Recyclable” refers to material that can be sorted, cleansed, and reconstituted using the City’s curbside municipal collection programs for the purpose of using the altered form in the manufacture of a new product. Such materials must be accepted and recycled by the Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) that receives Newton’s residential curbside recycling. “Recycling” does not include burning, incinerating, converting, or otherwise thermally destroying solid waste.*
- *“Compostable” means a product comprised of i) wood or fiber-based substrate only; or ii) bioplastic or other organic materials that break down in a compost pile within a set amount of time into safe material, and that is certified as such by the Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI), Compost Manufacturing Alliance (CMA), or OK Compost/TUV. Any bioplastic product must be clearly labeled with the applicable standard on the product. Products marked “compostable” or “biodegradable” that are not certified and marked as such may contain unsafe and toxic materials such as PFAS.*

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Items impacting food establishments

- Food establishments may not automatically provide single use accessories, including in takeout orders, whether orders are placed online, via phone, or in person. Such single use accessories may be provided only upon the request of the consumer either directly or in response to an inquiry by the food establishment. Single use accessories may not be prepackaged in sets. In addition, food establishments may have single use accessories available at self-service stations.
 - *“Accessories” means any food and beverage serviceware items that are not dishware and containers. The term “accessories” as used in this section includes, but is not limited to, straws, forks, spoons, knives, chopsticks, stirrers, condiment packages, and napkins.*
- **NOTE: Please update your online order system as soon as possible!**

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- Full service food establishments shall utilize only reusable food and beverage serviceware for dine-in customers.
- *“Full Service Food Establishment” means a food establishment where customers are seated at a table either by waitstaff or by themselves, and where orders are taken and served by waitstaff at the table.*

Ordinance rollout

- 1. Initial communication to inform and prepare restaurants, answer questions
 - *notice from HHS*
 - zerowaste@greennewton.org
 - *Chamber emails*
 - *this webinar*

- 2. Restaurant actions
 - *review containers, source replacements where necessary, talk to suppliers*
 - *train staff on “skip the stuff”: don’t automatically put accessories in orders*
 - *update online ordering to with opt-in for utensils , condiments, napkin*
 - *print and display informational signs (sample to be provided)*
 - *Meet with RecycleWorks MA if desired*

- 3. Consumer outreach and education
 - *mayor’s newsletter, Green Newton email, Fig City News, Newton Beacon, All Over Newton, etc*
 - *other social media*
 - *flyer in process for restaurants re: “skip the stuff” (accessories on request)*
 - *working with Newton-based **Boston Showcase** to develop a list of appropriate items*

Additional Items

- *RE: Reusables, there are several options: 6 restaurants in Newton are already working with Recirclable (www.recirclable.com)*
- *RE: Compostables, we encourage restaurants to consider composting – kitchen scraps, table leftovers, etc. Your hauler may provide composting, but Black Earth Compost specialized in this and several Newton restaurants use them. \$20/barrel/week. www.blackearthcompost.com*
- *BYO: In certain instances, the food code allows customers to bring their own clean containers*
 - *Encourage customers to bring their own reusable cups for coffee, etc*
 - *Less known, but customers can bring their own containers to fill themselves with leftovers at their table*

Choose containers that are reusable, compostable, or recyclable in Newton*



*Recyclable as determined by MassDEP's RecyclingWorks program or the City of Newton Sustainable Materials Management Division