



# Reusable Bag Ordinance

## Information for Retailers

### Requirements for Retailers Starting Saturday, February 1, 2014

The City of Arcata has adopted a Reusable Bag Ordinance to reduce environmental impacts and pollution from plastic bags, reduce waste, and promote a shift towards reusable bags for Zero Waste.

Starting February 1, 2014, retail stores in Arcata may not provide single use plastic carryout bags.

Starting August 1, 2014, retailers must charge a minimum 10 cents for each large paper bag provided to customers.

Customers may bring their own reusable bags or purchase paper or reusable bags from stores.

- Retail stores may **not** provide single-use plastic carryout bags to customers (plastic carryout bags are banned). Customers may bring their own reusable bags or purchase reusable bags from stores.
- Paper bags must contain a minimum of 40% postconsumer recycled content, be 100% recyclable, and show other information (see ordinance).
- Reusable bags must be made of machine-washable fabric; able to carry 22 pounds 125 times over a distance of 175 feet and not contain heavy metals in toxic amounts.
- Bags (paper or plastic) provided for use inside the store to package bulk items such as fruit, nuts, grains, candy or small hardware items; wrap meat or frozen foods, cover bakery goods etc. are allowed.
- The Reusable Bag Ordinance applies to all retail establishments in the City of Arcata including all stores that generate sales or use tax pursuant to the Bradley-Burns Uniform Local Sales and Use Tax Law.
- The ordinance does not apply to restaurants.

### Requirements for Retailers Starting Friday, August 1, 2014

- Stores may continue to provide customers with a recycled paper bag, but only if the store charges a minimum price of 10 cents per bag. Stores may exempt from bag charges, customers paying for goods with WIC, CalFresh, or other food stamp cards. Stores retain money collected from bag charges. The 10 cent bag charge is exempt from sales tax.
- Protective paper bags (smaller than 625 cubic inches) may be provided at no charge at the point of sale to protect purchased items from damage.
- Stores must itemize paper and reusable bag sales on customer receipts.

**More Information**  
[www.cityofarcata.org](http://www.cityofarcata.org)  
(707)822.8184  
[eservices@cityofarcata.org](mailto:eservices@cityofarcata.org)

**City staff is happy to meet with stores to answer questions. Call 822.8184 to schedule an appointment.**



**Banned**  
**Feb. 1, 2014**



**10¢ charge**  
**August 1, 2014**



**Small Paper**  
**Bags**



**Bring Your**  
**Own Bag**



**Allowed**  
**(produce/bulk)**

## Tips for Retailers

- ✓ **Create a record-keeping system by August 1, 2014:** Develop a system to track the purchase and sale of recyclable paper bags.
  - Assign bar codes to bags and program cash registers to show bag charges on customer receipts.
- ✓ **Prepare your employees:** Teach them to *ask* if the customer wants to use their own bags or purchase recycled paper bag for a minimum charge of 10 cents per bag.
  - Inform cashiers that customers paying for goods with WIC, CalFresh, SNAP food stamp cards are exempt from bag charges.
  - Understand the reason for the bag charge is to promote a shift toward the use of reusable bags to reduce litter and waste. Stores retain money collected from recyclable paper bag charges, which are not subject to sales tax.
  - Protective bags include bags for meat, produce, prescriptions, greeting cards, live fish or bulk items (exempt from bag charges).
- ✓ **Get help:** The City is happy to meet with stores or groups of employees who have questions.



## Bag Specifications

Bags offered for sale at checkout must meet the following requirements:

### Recycled Paper Bags

- ✓ Made with a minimum of 40% postconsumer recycled content paper
- ✓ May not contain old growth tree fiber
- ✓ Must be 100% recyclable at local facilities
- ✓ Must be capable of being composted
- ✓ Must have printed in a highly visible manner on the outside of the bag:
  - Recyclable
  - Percentage of postconsumer recycled content information

### Reusable Bags

- ✓ Made of cloth or other durable and machine washable fabric; or
- ✓ A durable plastic bag at least 2.25 mil thick specifically designed for multiple reuse.
- ✓ Proven capable of carrying at least 22 pounds, 125 times over a distance of 175 feet
- ✓ Must not contain lead, cadmium, or other heavy metals in toxic amounts.

## For Additional Information

**Visit:** [www.cityofarcata.org](http://www.cityofarcata.org)

**Call:** 707.822.8184

**Email:** [eservices@cityofarcata.org](mailto:eservices@cityofarcata.org)

**View the full ordinance language at [www.cityofarcata.org](http://www.cityofarcata.org)**