

# Springfield Township - Bag Ordinance

## FAQ for Businesses

### Summary

The Springfield Township Board of Commissioners voted on August 9, 2023, to enact the plastic bag ordinance. This ordinance bans the use of single use plastic bags by merchants in the township. This FAQ covers the common questions businesses may have regarding implementation.

### Where can I find more information?

You can go to <https://springfieldmontco.org/bagordinance> for more information.

### When does the ordinance take effect?

The ordinance will take place on Friday, February 9, 2024

### How does this impact my business?

Businesses will need to post signage by September 9th, 2023 informing customers that Single-Use Plastic Carry-Out Bags and Non-Recycled Paper Bags will no longer be provided by the establishment as of February 9, 2024.

### How can a business make this transition?

A business can prepare by taking the following steps:

- Placing the informational poster in storefront windows, entrances, and at the point-of-sale
- Establishing your policy and price for providing allowable bags
- Purchasing compliant reusable and recycled paper bags
- Adjusting cash register/point-of-sale settings for the bag fee to be displayed separately on the customer receipt
- Checking township website for updated information

### Will the township be collecting the bag fee?

No, this fee is kept by the business.

## Must businesses charge customers for recycled paper bags?

Yes, businesses must charge at least \$0.10 per bag (ten cents). The business retains the fee.

Research on the effect of plastic bag regulations shows that a fee on paper bags motivates customers to bring their own bags. Without a fee, customers take the free (to them) paper bags.

Single-use paper bags, although less harmful in some ways than plastic bags, also adversely hurt the environment: trees are cut down and energy is consumed to manufacture and transport the bags that are used just once. The ordinance aims to reduce the use of single-use bags of any kind.

## Is there an option if I don't want to charge a fee?

Section 85-4 covers the fee and how it should be displayed on a receipt. A copy of the ordinance is available on the township website and in the township administration building.

## What if I am not able to comply?

Section 85-8 of the ordinance covers the process for requesting an exemption. A copy of the ordinance is available on the township website and in the township administration building.

## Do I need to put up signage?

Yes. You can either have your own signage at your registers, or the Springfield Township Environmental Advisory Commission can provide digital signage that you can use.

## I need signage. Can I get help with what signage needs to be put in place?

Yes, the Springfield Township Environmental Advisory Commission has created signage that you can use in your place of business if you don't want to provide your own. You can download examples from <https://springfieldmontco.org/bagordinance>.

## If the township is not collecting the fee, why are they charging it?

The fee is part of a model ordinance enacted by other municipalities in the area. It is to help promote behavioral changes to reduce single-use plastic waste.

## Are there alternative trash or waste bags that I can carry in my store?

Bags provided at point of sale need adhere to the definition as outlined in section 85-2.

There are several brands you can carry alongside or in place of plastic bags for all different sizes of bags that consumers can purchase. These brands include but are not limited to Ghost Bags, Stout by Envision, Reli compostable bags, Primode compostable bags, UNNI ASTM 6400, Biobag, or other ASTM6400 certified bags that come in a variety of sizes can be used for home waste container needs

You can see more about alternatives in this article from Tree Hugger, <https://www.treehugger.com/best-biodegradable-trash-bags-5097468>

## Are there bags which are exempt from the ban?

The following types of single-use bags are **exempt** from the ban:

- laundry and dry-cleaning bags
- newspaper bags
- food storage, garbage, or pet waste bags sold in multiples in manufacturer's package
- bags used to bring perishable items (meat, fish, candy, nuts, fruits, vegetables, bakery items) to point of sale
- bags used to contain live animals such as fish or insects at a pet store
- bags associated with the delivery of goods by mail or similar transportation carrier (USPS, UPS, FedEx, Amazon)

## What if my customers have complaints or questions?

You can direct customers to <https://springfieldmontco.org/bagordinance> for more information.

## Are there exceptions?

Yes, A bag that holds less than one gallon without handles used to protect a purchased item from damaging or contaminating other purchased items when placed in a Reusable Bag, or RecyclablePaper Bag.

## What happens if a business does not comply with the requirements?

Section 85-7 covers enforcement. A copy of the ordinance is available on the township website and in the township administration building.

## What if I have more questions?

You can contact the Springfield Township EAC at [EACspringfieldmontco@gmail.com](mailto:EACspringfieldmontco@gmail.com). We can help you with questions or direct you to contact the township at (215) 836-7600.