Retail Training Guide

HANDLING CUSTOMER QUESTIONS
TO JERSEY CITY'S PLASTIC BAG BAN

The City of Jersey City will enforce a citywide ban on single-use plastic bags and non-recyclable paper bags starting June 28, 2019.

This ban will affect ALL retailers that currently use single-use plastic bags or non-recyclable paper bags. This includes grocery stores, restaurants, corner stores, pharmacies, clothing shops, hardware stores, beer and liquor stores and every other retail store that provides bags to customers at point of sale.

The following training guide provides answers to potential customer questions about the bag ban. Not all suggested responses will apply to your business and you may want to change the language to better reflect your unique business.

Single-use plastic bags have been provided free-of-charge for many years, so customers will need to change long-held expectations and habits which may result in questions and objections at the point of sale.

CUSTOMER QUESTIONS	SUGGESTED RESPONSES
Why can't I get a free plastic bag anymore?	Jersey City has banned all carryout single-use plastic bags and this applies to all retailers in Jersey City.
	The ban is designed to help protect the environment and wildlife by reducing the litter and damage caused by single-use plastic bags
	We now offer alternative bags but these do incur higher costs so we need to charge a small fee for them. These bags are reusable so they represent good value.
	Alternatively please feel free to bring your own reusable bags; there is no cost to use your own bags.
Which bags are banned and which are allowed?	Plastic bags that are under 2.25 mils in thickness and that cannot be used at least 125 times and cannot be cleaned are banned as well as paper bags that are not 100% recyclable and do not contain at least 40% post-consumer recycled content.
	Reusable bags such as cotton, nylon, and other fabric bags are allowed.
What difference will this ban really make?	In New Jersey we use 4.5 billion plastic bags annually and we typically use each one for less than 15 minutes. We only recycle 2-5% of these bags.
	Other countries across the world and other states and cities in America have implemented similar bans and witnessed a dramatic reduction in plastic bag litter and improved environmental outcomes.

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CUSTOMER QUESTIONS	SUGGESTED RESPONSES
I didn't bring enough reusable bags. What do I do?	We have a range of reusable bags available to purchase for a small fee.
	We have empty stock boxes available for you to pack and carry your goods.
	We have 100% recyclable paper bags available for your use.
	If your business has decided not to offer any bags at all, you will need to politely inform customers that you do not have any bags to offer them. If there is a chance that this will be problematic, you may want to consider keeping a small supply of compliant bags on hand for emergencies.
Why do I have to pay for alternative bags?	Reusable bags are higher quality and therefore higher cost so we do need to charge a small amount for them.
What should I use as a trash bin liner now?	If you are using a plastic or metal trash bin you could reduce your environmental impact by not using a liner and just washing out the bin after emptying. You could also wrap certain waste in newspaper or reuse packaging such as bread bags.
	Most supermarkets will continue to sell trash bin liners.
What should I use to pick up after my pet now?	In some dog-friendly parks and reserves, plastic bags are available to scoop animal waste. These bags are not affected by the ban. You can also purchase these from most pet stores and some supermarkets.
	Otherwise, you could use newspaper or reuse a bread bag

The City of Jersey City will run an educational campaign in the Spring of 2019 to educate and prepare customers for the ban, however retailers will need to be prepared to handle customer questions and objections. **Find guidance and signage on the City website at www.jerseycitynj.gov/bag-ban.**