



Government of **Western Australia**  
Department of **Water and Environmental Regulation**

WA Plan for Plastics

# single-use plastic bans

2022–25

*Comprehensive guide for business*



November 2023

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Regulation

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The National Retail Association is delivering a range of resources and services, including a dedicated website and a tollfree hotline, to assist businesses and organisations in complying with the ban.

For more information or advice:

<b>visit</b>	<b>call</b>	<b>email</b>
<a href="http://plasticsbanwa.com.au">plasticsbanwa.com.au</a>	1800 817 723	<a href="mailto:sustainability@nra.net.au">sustainability@nra.net.au</a>

We recommend all businesses check the website regularly for any updates about the ban, such as exemptions, enforcement and answers to common queries.



Scan here to visit the website for more information.

This publication is a collaborative effort between the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the National Retail Association.

# About the bans

Plastics have become part of our everyday life. They are inexpensive, convenient and used in many applications. However, the single-use nature of many of these plastics contributes to a wasteful, take-make-dispose economy and their lightweight nature and tendency to break up into microplastics make them a pollution risk.

On 13 June 2021, the Government of Western Australia (State Government) announced [Western Australia's Plan for Plastics](#) (WA Plan for Plastics). The WA Plan for Plastics was released in response to community feedback and provides a roadmap towards a more sustainable WA that is free of single-use plastics.

Both Stage 1 and 2 of the WA Plan for Plastics are now in effect. The phase-out of Stage 2 items began on 1 March 2023.

This document provides comprehensive guidance about the single-use plastic bans which are currently in effect or coming into effect soon in WA. The purpose of the document is to provide guidance to retailers, suppliers and manufacturers affected by the bans and help the transition to compliant alternatives.



The ban applies to anyone who supplies these items in WA.

- **Retail or hospitality businesses** such as restaurants, cafes, bars, hotels, takeaway food outlets, party supply stores, discount stores, supermarkets, market stalls, online stores, delivery services, and any other retailer must not supply banned items.
- **Manufacturers, suppliers, distributors and wholesalers** must not supply banned items in WA.
- **Community groups and not-for-profits**, such as those that use items as part of a service, for daily activities, or during events or fundraising activities, must not supply banned items.

Exemptions may be granted to a person or class of persons for a banned item. For more information on who can apply for an exemption and permitted reasons for an exemption and how to apply, visit the department's [Applications for a single-use plastic exemption](#) webpage.

**Important:** applications for exemptions to enable the continued supply of excess or leftover banned items will not be considered after the enforcement date for those items.

Businesses (such as distribution centres and online stores) can supply a banned item to a person outside WA, but it is recommended they check for similar bans in other jurisdictions.

1 JAN  
2022

### Stage 1

The Stage 1 bans started on **1 January 2022** with two transition periods.

1 JUL  
2022

From **1 July 2022**, it became illegal to:

- ✘ supply all plastic shopping bags with handles
- ✘ supply disposable plastic utensils – straws, stirrers and cutlery
- ✘ supply expanded polystyrene (EPS) food containers and trays
- ✘ release a balloon into the air
- ✘ supply disposable plastic foodware without lids – plates, bowls and food containers.

1 OCT  
2022

From **1 October 2022**, it became illegal to:

- ✘ supply unlidged plastic cups for cold drinks.

1 MAR  
2023

### Stage 2

The Stage 2 bans started on **1 March 2023** with staggered enforcement dates between 2023 and 2025 to provide time for businesses to comply. Whilst it is illegal to sell or supply banned items after their enforcement date, the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation (the department) will take an education-first approach as part of the introduction of these changes.

1 SEP  
2023

From **1 September 2023**, it is illegal to supply:

- ✘ expanded plastic packaging (loose fill)
- ✘ EPS cups and EPS trays for meat and seafood
- ✘ degradable plastics
- ✘ disposable cotton buds with plastic stems
- ✘ microbeads in rinse-off personal care, cosmetic and cleaning products.

1 MAR  
2024

From **1 March 2024**, it is illegal to supply:

- ✘ disposable coffee cups and all plastic cup lids
- ✘ disposable plastic trays for takeaway or eat-in food.

1 SEP  
2024

From **1 September 2024**, it is illegal to supply:

- ✘ disposable plastic produce bags used for fresh unpackaged fruit and vegetables
- ✘ disposable plastic lids for bowls, trays and containers used for takeaway or eat-in food.

1 JUL  
2025

From **1 July 2025**, it is illegal to supply:

- ✘ expanded plastic packaging (moulded or cut).



### How are the bans being implemented?

The [WA Plan for Plastics](#) is being implemented by the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation.

The department will work with businesses and organisations to ensure they understand their obligations. The department has engaged the National Retail Association to help businesses learn more about the ban and understand how to comply.

It is an offence to provide false or misleading information about a banned plastic item.

Fines of \$5,000 per offence apply.

From the enforcement dates listed above, it will be an offence to:

- supply a banned plastic item
- release, or cause/permit the release, of a balloon.

# Banned items

Important!

The 2022 ban replaces the previous ban on lightweight plastic shopping bags.

## Plastic shopping bags (of any thickness)



### Banned from 1 July 2022



The ban now applies to all plastic shopping bags with handles used to convey goods from a business including:

- shopping bags made from plastic film of any thickness
- paper shopping bags that are plastic laminated
- the above bags used for home delivery or online sales.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- plastic bags without handles
- produce bags
- sealed packaging (e.g. bread bags)
- other bags not intended for conveying goods from a retailer (e.g. bags for waste, nappies or dog waste).



### Alternatives



**First**, consider whether you need to supply a bag. You could encourage customers to bring their own, reuse stock boxes or provide trolleys.

**Then**, consider using reusable bags made from fabrics such as cotton, jute, hessian, bamboo or hemp. You can also use synthetic fabrics such as nylon, recycled polyethylene terephthalate (PET) or polypropylene; however, non-woven polypropylene bags (like the green bag pictured to the side) must have stitched seams and a minimum weight of 90 gsm.

Any shopping bag with handles made from plastic or compostable plastic film is banned, regardless of reusability.

**Finally**, if you need a disposable option, you can use paper bags, but these must not have a plastic or cello laminate.

# Produce bags for loose fruit and vegetables



Each year Western Australians use more than 115 million produce bags. Most end up in landfill but many are littered in the environment, harming our wildlife. There are currently no widespread recycling options for produce bags in WA and the bags contaminate other recycling streams.

## **X** Banned from 1 September 2024



The ban applies to the sale and supply of plastic produce bags for loose fresh fruit and vegetables.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- produce bags used for anything other than loose fresh fruit and vegetables (e.g. raw meat, bakery products, deli items, crafting items)
- reusable produce bags made from plastic fabric eg. polyester or nylon
- pre-packaged fruit and vegetables (e.g. grape and banana bags)
- bulk bags sold on-shelf (e.g. freezer /sandwich / zip-lock bags).
- plastic produce bags which have achieved an Australian composting standard (AS 4736:2006 or AS 5810:2010)

## **✓** Alternatives



**First**, encourage customers to place loose produce directly into their baskets and trolleys, then straight onto the scales. This practice avoids produce bags altogether and is becoming more common. Customers can also be encouraged to bring their own reusable bags.

**Then**, consider whether you could offer loose produce or bulk produce in shop-owned caddies for weighing. Loose produce could then be transferred to the customer's own reusable bags at the point of sale.

**Finally**, consider providing disposable alternatives such as paper bags or boxes. Plastic produce bags which have achieved an Australian composting standard are also allowed.

### Tips on how to comply:

When dealing with customer's own produce bags at a point of sale, you need to ensure the bag weight is removed. To do this, you can:

- Remove fruit or vegetables from customers' bags and place them onto the weighing station.
- Tare for multiple common alternatives, such as paper bags and reusable fabric or mesh bags. Businesses can pre-program their point of sale for multiple bag weights that employees or customers can select from.
- Provide in-store reusable caddies or buckets for customers to gather produce and bring to the point of sale where the known weight of this caddy or bucket can be removed.

It is recommended you communicate changes to your customers before the ban starts by putting up signage about the upcoming change. Printable resources for use in store (including translated resources) will be available on the [Plastics Ban WA website](#), with additional digital resources such as social media tiles available on the [department's website](#).

**IMPORTANT:** The Western Australian Government is reviewing whether barrier bags beyond those used for fresh fruit and vegetables should be phased out, and whether a design standard is required for all produce/barrier bags. Businesses are strongly encouraged to register for updates via the [website](#).





Degradable plastics are plastics that contain additives that cause them to break up or fragment quickly under certain conditions. Although this feature was originally thought to address the plastic pollution problem, it has been demonstrated that the plastic fragments persist in the environment as microplastics, enter the food chain and never disappear. Degradable plastics also contaminate recyclable waste streams and some of the additives they contain can be toxic to the environment.

The labelling or promotion as degradable creates confusion and leads businesses and consumers to believe that they are making a more environmentally friendly choice, which is misleading. Certified compostable products generally do not have these additives and compost naturally over longer periods.

## Banned from 1 September 2023



**Important:** This is a ban on a type of material and is not specific to any particular plastic item. It applies to all products, packaging and other uses.

The ban applies to all degradable plastics including:

- oxo-degradable
- photo-degradable
- landfill-degradable
- any other plastic material designed to fragment more quickly.

Degradable plastics may not be clearly labelled, and many degradable plastics are labelled or promoted using the above terms. Some are promoted as 'biodegradable' but fail to provide any composting certification or evidence of the mechanism by which the product breaks down rather than breaking up into pieces as a degradable plastic would.

Whilst composting certification is not compulsory for biodegradable plastic, the manufacturer must be able to provide evidence that demonstrates the plastic is able to be broken down by microorganisms into carbon dioxide, water, biomass and a mineral residue, and does not contain an additive designed to accelerate fragmentation of the plastic.

Degradable plastics are commonly found in soft plastics. Some common examples are:

- dog waste
- magazine wraps
- agricultural soft plastic products.
- dry-cleaning bags and garment bags
- bin liners

## Alternatives



Soft plastic products that can be reused or recycled can be made without a fragmenting additive.

Alternatively, products can be manufactured using compostable bioplastics that meets the [Australian Standard](#) (AS) for industrial (AS 4736:2006) or home (AS 5810:2010) composting.

**First**, consider whether the plastic can be avoided. Avoid supplying all unnecessary plastic to the customer.

**Then**, consider using or supplying AS-certified compostable bioplastics.

**Finally**, consider using or supplying soft plastics without additives designed to accelerate fragmentation.





### Tips on how to comply:

Do you have a product that fragments after a few uses or are you unsure of a new product's degradability?

Degradable plastic products may be difficult to identify. Start by following these steps:

1. Check whether terms like 'degradable', 'oxo-degradable', 'photo-degradable', 'landfill-degradable' or 'fragmenting' are used to describe the product. If so, it is likely to contain degradable plastic.
2. Look for the Australian Standard compostability certification logo. This indicates that the product is compostable and does not contain degradable plastic.
3. Ask the product distributor or manufacturer whether the plastic product contains an additive to accelerate its fragmentation under certain conditions.

If you are still unsure, contact the department's plastics team at [plastic-action@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:plastic-action@dwer.wa.gov.au) for assistance.



Plastic microbeads in rinse-off personal care, cosmetics and cleaning products enter the wastewater system, making their way into our oceans and waterways and are a risk to wildlife if ingested.

A voluntary agreement to phase out plastic microbeads in rinse-off personal care, cosmetics and cleaning products (known as BeadRecede) has been in place across Australia since 2017. A survey of relevant products in 2020 found 99.3 per cent were microbead free, but that most of the remaining products that still contain microbeads are used for personal care such as face scrubs.

## Banned from 1 September 2023



The ban applies to rinse-off personal care cosmetics and cleaning products that contain microbeads, including:

- rinse-off products such as dyes, shampoo, conditioner, shaving cream, hairsprays, gels, creams, pastes, scrubs, exfoliants, masks and face, hand and body cleansers
- oral hygiene products including toothpaste, mouthwash and tooth whiteners
- cleaning products in indoor and outdoor commercial, industrial, and residential settings.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- wipe-off products such as sunscreen, moisturiser and make-up
- leave-on personal care products such as moisturiser, deodorant, make-up and lipstick
- printing applications such as toners and textile printing products
- craft glitter
- products required for industrial and medical applications (other than cleaning products).

## Alternatives



Non-plastic products with the same abrasive, exfoliant, filler and aesthetic function – from materials like pumice and salt – are available in more than 99 per cent of products. Reusable exfoliant products such as brushes and loofas can be used to replace rinse-off exfoliants.



Cotton buds with plastic stems are a common single-use plastic item that can cause problems for wildlife when littered into the environment. Many industries and manufacturers have been proactive in transitioning to plastic-free alternatives.

## Banned from 1 September 2023



The ban applies to cotton buds with plastic stems, including stems made with degradable plastic and bioplastic materials.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- cotton buds and swabs for professional medical, veterinary, scientific, forensic and law-enforcement purposes
- cotton buds or swabs that make up part of a testing kit, such as rapid antigen tests
- applicators that are pre-packaged as part of a set, such as in cosmetic kits
- reusable plastic cotton buds.

## Alternatives



Single-use cotton buds made with compostable stems (e.g. bamboo, cardboard or sugarcane) are widely available. Reusable plastic cotton buds are also a permitted alternative.



Single-use cups for hot and cold beverages can be made from a range of plastic materials. Before the 1 October 2022 ban on cold beverage cups, these cups were typically supplied in clear plastic or clear bioplastic cups. Hot beverages are typically supplied in plastic-lined paperboard or expanded polystyrene cups.

This page provides information about cups only. Plastic cup lids are banned from 1 March 2024 – more information is provided under [Cup lids for hot and cold beverages](#).

## Banned from 1 October 2022



The ban applies to:

- disposable plastic cups or plastic glasses of any shape used for cold drinks including disposable plastic wine glasses/flutes and shot glasses
- disposable plastic-lined paper/fibre cups which are not certified compostable
- disposable cups made purely from compostable plastic, such as PLA.

## Banned from 1 September 2023



The ban applies to:

- expanded polystyrene cups of any shape.

## Banned from 1 March 2024



The ban applies to:

- disposable plastic cups of any shape which are used for hot drinks such as tea, coffee and hot chocolate
- disposable plastic-lined paper/fibre cups which are not certified compostable.

The bans on plastic cups do **not** apply to:

- disposable paper or fibre cups which are lined or coated with plastic or bioplastic where the whole cup has achieved the [Australian Standard](#) for industrial composting (AS 4736:2006) or home composting (AS 5810:2010)
- plastic beverage containers such as soft drink/juice bottles or jars (however, these may have obligations under the State Government's [Containers for Change](#) container deposit scheme)
- containers which are used for food (for example, a container for ice cream or soup may be called a 'cup' but is defined as a bowl under this ban – see [Foodware \(plates, bowls, trays and containers\)](#))
- reusable plastic cups that are designed for reuse, being strong and sturdy
- expanded polystyrene cups that are part of a pre-packaged product such as a noodle pack.



## Alternatives



**First**, consider whether customers could be encouraged to bring their own cups. Alternatively, contact [Plastic Free Places](#) for further information on joining a cup exchange scheme or start a cup return scheme for your customers.

**Then**, consider reusable options such as ceramic or metal. If most customers drink onsite, you could save money and waste by using washable items.

**Finally**, if you do need disposable alternatives, look for lined/coated paper or fibre cups that have achieved the [Australian Standard](#) for industrial (AS 4736:2006) or home (AS 5810:2010) composting.

### Did you know?

Most paper or fibre-based cups have a plastic or bioplastic lining or coating to make them waterproof.

### Tips on how to comply:

- When looking to source compliant cups for hot and cold beverages, make sure you talk with your supplier to ensure the lining or coating applied to the inside of the cup is compliant with the regulations.
- A lined or coated paper cup is compliant if it is certified to the [Australian Standard](#) for industrial (AS 4736:2006) or home (AS 5810:2010) composting. Without these certifications, don't believe claims or labels. More information about composting certification is available on the [WA Plastics Ban website](#).
- Items made purely from bioplastic (such as clear cups made from polylactic acid [PLA]) are not allowed, even if they are certified. This is because bioplastics are plastic and behave the same way as regular plastics in the environment. Bioplastics are not readily separated from other plastics such as PET so they contaminate recycling processes.
- Make sure you have used your non-compliant stock and transitioned to compliant stock before the ban starts, as you cannot supply banned cups after enforcement dates even if you purchased it prior to 1 March 2024.

# Cup lids for hot and cold beverages



Important!

Lids include rigid or flexible lids, including heat-sealed film applied to the top of a cup.

Each year Western Australians use more than 250 million plastic cup lids for hot and cold beverages. Plastic lids are commonly littered. Many are made of materials which are not recyclable and contaminate recycling streams. Plastic-lined paperboard also contaminates composting and recycling streams.

This page provides information about cup lids. Plastic cups are banned from 1 March 2024 – more information is provided under [Cups for hot and cold beverages](#). Plastic lids for containers and bowls are also banned in September 2024 – more information is provided under [Foodware \(plates, bowls, trays and containers\)](#).

## Banned from 1 March 2024



The ban applies to:

- disposable plastic cup lids for all hot and cold cups
- paperboard/fibre cup lids which have a plastic or bioplastic lining
- bioplastic lids made purely from bioplastic
- certified compostable plastic lids
- heat-sealed films made of plastic or bioplastic.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- paperboard/fibre lids which are uncoated and completely plastic-free
- reusable plastic cup lids that are designed for washing and reuse (e.g. as part of a 'keep' cup).

## Alternatives



**First**, encourage customers to bring their own lidded cups or go without a disposable lid. Better yet, contact [Plastic Free Places](#) for further information on joining a cup exchange scheme or start a cup return scheme for your customers.

**Then**, consider reusable options such as ceramic or metal. If most customers drink onsite, you could save money and waste by using washable items.

**Finally**, if you do need disposable cup lids, they must be uncoated and entirely made of paperboard or fibre (without a plastic or bioplastic lining or coating). Acceptable materials include uncoated paperboard and sugarcane pulp (also known as bagasse).

Did you know?

Plastic-lined paperboard lids look very similar to unlined, all-paperboard/fibre lids.

Tips on how to comply:

- Tell your supplier that you are looking for a lid that is all paperboard/fibre, unlined and plastic free. You may need to remind them that certified compostable plastic lids (such as PLA) are **not** allowed.
- Ensure that your cup lid is a safe fit to your compliant cup stock. See [Cups for hot and cold beverages](#).



## Banned from 1 July 2022



The ban applies to:

- disposable plastic straws
- disposable plastic stirrers and swizzle sticks
- disposable plastic forks, spoons, knives, sporks, splayds, chopsticks and food picks.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- utensils used for food preparation or serving ware (e.g. tongs, cake servers)
- items which arrive to store in pre-packaged food and beverage products (e.g. a straw attached to juice box)
- exempted uses of straws, which include supply in a care facility, by a medical care provider or in connection with an aircraft.

## Alternatives



**First**, consider whether you need to provide straws, stirrers or cutlery, especially if many of your customers consume your products at home or the office.

**Then**, consider reusable utensils such as metal, bamboo, silicone or glass. You could also encourage customers to bring their own reusable utensils which are available in handy kits.

**Finally**, if you do need disposable alternatives, consider uncoated paper, wood, wheat or bamboo.

**Exemption for straws:** Businesses can supply disposable plastic straws in certain situations to ensure access for people with a disability or medical need. In such cases:

- Businesses can keep plastic straws out of view and supply a single plastic straw only if a customer requests one as part of food or drink supply. You do not need to ask for a reason and you are not obliged to provide a plastic straw.
- Packs of plastic straws can be supplied by authorised organisations and care facilities (see the list in the [Stage 1 ban – Plastic drinking straws](#) fact sheet).
- Manufacturers can supply plastic straws to clients if they have reasonable grounds to believe they are for the above purposes only.

*Important!*

Utensils that contain any form of 'plant-based' or compostable plastic are **not** allowed. Many straws and cutlery made from sugarcane or corn starch contain bioplastics and are therefore banned.

## Foodware (plates, bowls, trays and containers)



Each year Western Australians use more than 130 million lids for disposable plastic containers, bowls, plates and trays used for takeaway or eat-in food. These foodware items are commonly littered and are not readily recyclable, contaminating recycling systems.

Whilst the Stage 1 ban focused on unlidded foodware, the Stage 2 ban captures lidded foodware when used for takeaway and eat-in food. The ban will apply differently according to the circumstances of the product supply.

Disposable unlidded plates, bowls, expanded plastic (such as EPS) trays and containers were banned under Stage 1 in July 2022.

Stage 2 adds disposable unlidded plastic trays used for takeaway or eat-in food, with enforcement starting on 1 March 2024. Stage 2 will also ban disposable plastic containers, bowls, plates and trays when supplied with a lid, with enforcement starting on 1 September 2024.



### Banned from 1 July 2022



The 1 July 2022 ban applies to:

- disposable plastic unlidded plates, bowls or containers
- packs of unlidded disposable plastic foodware.

This includes those items made wholly from plastic or bioplastic.

The 1 July 2022 ban does **not** apply to:

- disposable plastic trays for raw meat or seafood
- unlidded plates, bowls, trays and food containers made from paper/fibre which have a plastic or bioplastic lining, where the whole product is certified compostable to AS standards (please note that paper plates must be plastic free)
- bowls, trays or food containers which have a lid when served (until 1 September 2024, when lidded foodware is banned)
- food or drink items which have been pre-packaged offsite (e.g. a tray for a frozen meal)
- plastic foodware designed for reuse
- large serving ware, catering platters and their lids (e.g. large platters).





### Banned from 1 March 2024



The 1 March 2024 ban applies to:

- disposable plastic unlined food trays, such as sushi trays and bento boxes.



The 1 March 2024 ban does **not** apply to:

- compostable lined paperboard trays certified to the Australian Standard for industrial (AS 4736:2006) or home (AS 5810:2010) composting
- trays which have a lid when served (until 1 September 2024, when lidded takeaway foodware is banned)
- plastic trays designed for reuse
- plastic trays for raw meat and seafood (e.g. from butchers and supermarket meat sections)
- food or drink items which have been pre-packaged offsite (e.g. a tray for a frozen meal).



### Banned from 1 September 2024



The 1 September 2024 ban applies to:

- plastic lids (including rigid or flexible lids, heat-sealed films or windows) for bowls, trays or containers that are used for takeaway or eat-in food and are not pre-packed
- lidded plastic bowls, trays or containers that are used for takeaway or eat-in food which were previously exempt because they were served with a lid
- packs of lidded disposable plastic foodware.



The 1 September 2024 ban does **not** apply to:

- lids or lidded foodware made primarily from paper or fibre with a plastic or bioplastic coating where the whole item is certified to the Australian Standard for industrial (AS 4736:2006) or home (AS 5810:2010) composting
- food that has been pre-packaged offsite (see [FAQ 2](#) on P19)
- plastic lids and windows for pre-packed takeaway food placed on display (see [FAQ 2](#) on P19)
- reusable foodware designed for washing and ongoing use
- lidded foodware that contains foodstuffs that are not considered to be eat-in or takeaway food (see [FAQ 3](#) on P19).



## Alternatives



**First**, consider whether customers could bring their own foodware.

**Then**, consider reusable options such as ceramic, metal, bamboo, glass or thick reusable plastic. If most of your customers dine in store you could save money and waste by using washable items.

**Finally**, if you do need disposable alternatives, consider uncoated paper, bamboo, wood or sugarcane pulp.

*Important!*

Items made wholly from bioplastic are not allowed (even if they are certified compostable).



## Foodware frequently asked questions (FAQs)

### FAQ 1: Is my item a bowl, food container or cup?

If it contains food and is round, it is a bowl. Bowls (unlidded) were banned on 1 July 2022. However, if it has a lid and is supplied with takeaway or eat-in in food, then the whole item (base and lid) is not banned until 1 September 2024.

If it contains food and is not round, it is a food container. Food containers were banned on 1 July 2022. However, if it has a lid and is supplied with takeaway or eat-in food, then the whole item (base and lid) is not banned until 1 September 2024.

If it contains a beverage, it is a cup. See [Cups for hot and cold beverages](#).

### FAQ 2: What rules apply to pre-packaged or pre-packed takeaway food?

**Pre-packaged product** means a product that:

- arrives at the premises from which it is to be supplied to a consumer in a container or packaging in or by which the product is wholly enclosed, whether or not it is also in an outer container or packaging that contains multiple units of the product
- is not designed to be removed from its container or packaging, other than any outer container or packaging, before it is supplied to the consumer.

For example, a pre-packaged product is something made and packaged offsite and not modified prior to sale to the customer, such as a sandwich or salad made and packaged at a bulk food manufacturer and then delivered to multiple stores to be placed on shelf. If the food is a pre-packaged product, then **the ban does not apply** and both the base and lid of the foodware can remain plastic. Please consider the most appropriate packaging for your circumstances and avoid using plastic where possible.

### Pre-packed takeaway food:

- means takeaway food that is prepared in advance and placed into foodware before being put on display for selection by a consumer
- does not include takeaway food that is prepared or placed into foodware following an order or request by a consumer.

For example, pre-packed takeaway food is a sandwich, salad or yoghurt made on the premises, packed ahead of time, and placed on display for customers to purchase later (e.g. grab-and-go service). If this is the case, the foodware base must comply with the ban, but the lid or window can remain plastic if desired. This ensures pre-packed takeaway food can remain visible with a transparent plastic lid or window so customers can select it from display.

### FAQ 3: What is takeaway or eat-in food?

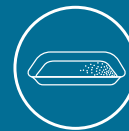
**Eat-in food** means food that is intended to be eaten at the premises at which it is supplied, including restaurants, food courts, markets or anywhere food is typically consumed on the premises.

**Takeaway food** means food in which the whole item is typically consumed soon after purchase without any further preparation, ingredients or components.

Items that are **not** likely to be considered takeaway food (and therefore not included in the ban) include:

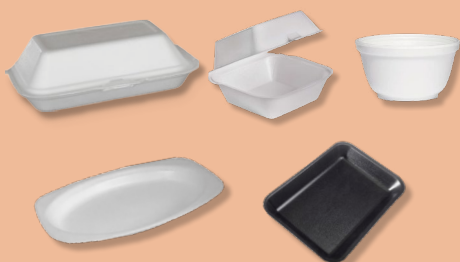
- foodstuffs which are typically used as an ingredient or component of another dish (e.g. olives, cheese, salami, sauce, dip, a plain bread roll)
- food that needs further preparation, cooling or heating before being consumed (e.g. a cold meat pie)
- food which is not typically consumed whole or in one sitting (e.g. a multi-serve tub of yoghurt, multi-pack of cookies or bread rolls, bulk pack of fruit pieces, large cake).

# Expanded polystyrene and other expanded plastic food containers and trays



Expanded plastic foodware (typically made from expanded polystyrene) has no recycling options in WA and is commonly sent to landfill or littered. It is a lightweight material easily transported by wind and water when littered and can break into small pieces, posing a hazard to wildlife.

## Banned from 1 July 2022



The ban applies to:

- disposable food containers and trays made from expanded plastic such as clamshells, plates and bowls (e.g. for fruit and vegetable packaging or takeaway meal services).

The ban does **not** apply to:

- EPS containers that are part of a pre-packaged product (e.g. on-shelf noodle cups)
- EPS trays used to package raw meat or seafood products.

## Banned from 1 September 2023

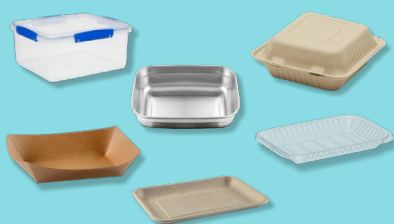


This ban builds on the July 2022 ban to include expanded plastic trays used for raw meat and seafood, including those that are pre-packaged.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- expanded plastic/foam boxes for home delivery of fresh food and pre-prepared meals where there is an opportunity for collection and reuse
- expanded plastic pre-packaging for non-perishable food products (e.g. expanded plastic noodle cups)
- non-expanded plastic trays used for food that is not takeaway or eat-in food (e.g. raw meat, seafood).

## Alternatives



**First**, consider whether customers could bring their own takeaway food containers or whether you could introduce reusable options such as ceramic, metal, bamboo or glass containers.

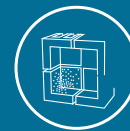
**Then**, if you require single-use items, consider uncoated paper, bamboo, aluminium or sugarcane pulp. Consider butcher's paper for raw meat and seafood.

**Finally**, consider lined paperboard or pulp products with Australian Standard composting certification. For foods which are not takeaway or eat-in food, such as raw meat and seafood, you can continue to use plastic trays (consider readily recyclable plastics such as PET) if required.

Please be aware of the rules for plastic foodware when considering your options. See [Foodware \(plates, bowls, trays and containers\)](#).

*Important!*

# Packaging made from expanded polystyrene and other expanded plastic



Expanded plastics (commonly referred to as plastic foam) are a lightweight material easily transported by wind and water when littered. They break into smaller pieces in the environment, which poses a hazard to wildlife. Expanded plastic cannot be recycled in kerbside recycling systems and very little is recycled in commercial or industrial systems.

This ban applies to all forms of expanded and foamed plastics, such as EPS, expanded polyethylene (EPE), expanded polypropylene (EPP) and expanded bioplastics.

The ban aligns with direction of the national [Roadmap to Implement the National Phase Out of Business-to-Consumer EPS Packaging](#), although it also captures other expanded plastics and extends responsibility beyond brand owners. The ban applies to all WA businesses, manufacturers, retailers and distributors that sell or supply goods that contain this packaging.

The following bans on expanded plastic packaging will be enforceable in two stages.

## Banned from 1 September 2023



The ban applies to loose-fill EPS and other foamed plastic packaging material such as packing peanuts, packing beads and S-shaped beads.

The ban does **not** apply to:

- flexible plastic wraps and sleeves made from expanded plastic
- fresh produce boxes and bulk cold home-delivered meal services
- packaging retained by a business after the installation of consumer goods by a licensed installer (e.g. air-conditioner packaging)
- specialist packaging for medical applications, (e.g. for organ transport or pharmaceuticals).

## Banned from 1 July 2025

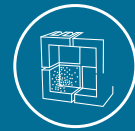


The ban applies to moulded, cut or shaped packaging made from expanded plastic.



The ban does **not** apply to:

- flexible plastic wraps and sleeves made from expanded plastic
- packaging for products weighing more than 45 kg
- packaging for fragile or precision products (see more information below)
- fresh produce boxes and bulk cold home-delivered meal services
- packaging retained by a business after that installation of consumer goods by a licensed installer
- packaging for products where the packaging is a permanent part of the product's carry case or kit
- specialist packaging for medical applications, for example, organ transport or pharmaceuticals.



## Fragile and precision products

Expanded plastic packaging may be used to protect items that have been identified by the manufacturer as being fragile and requiring protective packaging that complies with a standard specified by the manufacturer.

If expanded plastic is used, the department would expect the manufacturer to be able to provide documentation that demonstrates:

- a decision has been made that the product could be functionally damaged in transit and/or present a safety risk without protective packaging
- the standard of protection that is required, such as Australian Standard transport tests (drop tests, vibration tests or rough handling tests), International Safe Transit Association tests for packaged products or international standard packaging performance tests

- that alternatives to expanded plastic packaging have been explored – if at least two suitable packaging alternatives (e.g. moulded cardboard, hybrid card and air pillow wrap) fail to provide the required standard of protection, this would be sufficient evidence that expanded plastic packaging is required.

Hybrid packaging with reduced single-use plastic content would be considered the next best approach.



## Timing of bans

From 1 July 2025, products supplied to a retailer (or organisation for supply) with a manufacturer's date going back to 1 July 2024 will need to comply. Products supplied prior to 1 July 2024 will not be impacted.



## Alternatives



**First**, consider whether your goods require protective packaging at all or if expanded plastic can be replaced with reusable protective packaging and wraps.

**Then**, consider whether you can use paper-based or pulp-based protective packaging, such as moulded pulp or cardboard, honeycombed paper, wool or straw. Soft plastic air pillows and plastic bubble wrap are allowed, but it is recommended that you consider plastic-free options first.



- Understand how the regulations apply to your products and business, including reviewing goods in your range that may not be your own brand.
- Communicate with manufacturers and suppliers to ensure you are ordering products that contain compliant packaging which is free from expanded plastic.

# Steps and support for business

## 1. Plan ahead and transition early.

*Important!*

You cannot continue to supply banned stock after the enforcement dates, even if you purchased it beforehand.

- Assess which items in your range need to change.
- Stop ordering banned items now and use up existing stock.
- Order alternatives and change stock well ahead of the ban deadlines to avoid supply issues.
- If you have large amounts of stock, speak to your supplier as they may accept returns or exchanges.
- You may also be able to transfer excess stock to another state (however, be aware of similar bans in other states).
- If you cannot exhaust, return, exchange or transfer your stock in time, contact a local recycler to see whether they can take some items.

Consumers are increasingly seeking to support sustainable businesses and products.

**First**, consider whether you need to keep supplying items like straws, lids and cutlery if your customers do not really need them.

**Next**, think about whether you can use reusable, washable alternatives and reduce the number of items you give away. Encourage customers to bring their own.

**Then**, if you still need disposable items, ensure they are compliant and safe for your products. Check the specific rules for each item and allowed alternatives. If you are unsure about your options, check the [Plastics Ban WA website](#) or speak to specialists at the [National Retail Association](#).

Ask your supplier to answer these questions in writing before you order alternatives:

**1. Do these items comply with the WA plastics legislation (both Stage 1 and Stage 2 bans)?**

**2. Do these items contain any form of plastic or compostable plastic?**

- Compostable plastic alternatives are banned for most items.
- The only exemptions are bowls, trays, containers or cups which have a plastic or bioplastic lining/coating AND:
  - are primarily made from paperboard or fibre, AND
  - have achieved Australian Standard composting certification (either AS 5810:2010 or AS 4736:2006).
- Lids for bowls, containers and trays have the same exemption but remember that cup lids must be completely plastic free.
- Produce bags which have achieved an Australian Standard composting certification are also exempt.

**3. Do these items contain any degradable plastic or banned types of expanded plastic packaging?**

It is an offence to supply banned items or to provide false or misleading information about a banned item.

2. Weigh up your best long-term options.

3. Speak to your supplier

- Prepare your staff for customer questions about the ban and inform them of changes you have decided to make.
- Make sure food and beverage staff know that they are allowed to provide an individual plastic straw on request with food or beverages (and do not have to ask for a reason) but must not have these on display.
- Inform your customers ahead of time and prepare them for the changes you will be implementing.
- It is recommended that suppliers contact their clients and that all retailers display signage well ahead of the ban dates so customers have time to adjust. Signage (including translated signage) is available at [plasticsbanwa.com.au](http://plasticsbanwa.com.au).

4. Inform your team and customers to help them prepare for the changes

Need help?

The National Retail Association is delivering a range of resources and services, including a dedicated website and a tollfree hotline, to assist businesses and organisations in complying with the ban.

**For more information or advice:**

visit [plasticsbanwa.com.au](http://plasticsbanwa.com.au)      call 1800 817 723      email [sustainability@nationalretail.org.au](mailto:sustainability@nationalretail.org.au)

We recommend all businesses check the website regularly for any updates about the ban, such a exemptions, enforcement and answers to common queries.



Scan here to visit the website for more information.

This publication is a collaborative effort between the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation and the National Retail Association.

**Department of Water and Environmental Regulation**

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