

Single-use plastics ban: plates, bowls, trays, containers, cutlery and balloon sticks

From 1 October 2023 businesses must no longer supply, sell or offer certain single-use plastic items in England.

The ban on these items includes:

- online and over-the-counter sales and supply
- items from new and existing stock
- all types of single-use plastic, including biodegradable, compostable and recycled
- items wholly or partly made from plastic, including coating or lining

'Single use' means the item is meant to be used only once for its original purpose.

Businesses should:

- use up existing stock before 1 October
- find re-usable alternatives to single-use items
- use different materials for single-use plastic items

If you continue to supply banned single-use plastics after 1 October, you could be fined.

There are some exemptions to the ban, depending on the item.

Plates, bowls and trays

From 1 October you must not supply single-use plastic plates, trays and bowls to members of the public.

Exemptions

You can still supply single-use plastic plates, bowls and trays if either of the following apply:

- you are supplying them to another business
- the items are packaging (pre-filled or filled at the point of sale)

Examples of this type of packaging include:

- a pre-filled salad bowl or ready meal packaged in a tray
- a plate filled at the counter of a takeaway
- a tray used to deliver food

Cutlery and balloon sticks

From 1 October you must not supply single-use plastic cutlery or balloon sticks.

There are no exemptions to this ban.

Polystyrene food and drink containers

From 1 October you must not supply ready-to-consume food and drink in polystyrene containers. This includes in polystyrene cups.

Polystyrene means expanded and extruded polystyrene.

Exemptions

You can still supply food or drink in polystyrene containers if it needs further preparation before it is consumed. For example, further preparation could mean:

- adding water
- microwaving
- toasting

Inspections

Local authorities will carry out inspections to make sure the rules are being followed.

Inspectors can:

- visit a shop or store
- make test purchases
- speak to staff
- ask to see records

If you break the law, inspectors can order your business to cover the cost of the investigation.

Complaints about a business breaking the law can be made to Trading Standards
tmail2@solihull.gov.uk

Get help

If you have any questions about what the new rules mean for your business, contact Plastics.Consultation@defra.gov.uk.

Technical information for manufacturers: expanded and extruded polystyrene
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