

CITY OF OAKLAND



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OFFICIAL NOTICE: NEW REUSABLE FOODWARE LAW IN EFFECT

接收此函中文版本，請造訪：

Para recibir esta carta en español, visite:

www.OaklandRecycles.com/Reusables

Để nhận thư này bằng tiếng Việt, hãy truy cập:

Oakland Food Vendors:

The City of Oakland (City) adopted a Reusable Foodware Ordinance (Ordinance) in December 2023. The Ordinance aims to reduce plastic pollution in our environment, prioritize the use of reusable foodware over single-use foodware, and ensure single-use foodware is free of harmful chemicals. The rules apply to **food vendors** in Oakland including restaurants, cafes, bars, delis, fast-food establishments, food trucks, and event food booths. Additional guidance and resources are available at www.OaklandRecycles.com/Reusables.

What is single-use foodware?

Single-use foodware (photos below) includes cups, plates, utensils, clamshells, and bowls– designed to be used once then thrown away.



Single-use foodware and foodware accessories (like straws, napkins, and condiment packets) are a major source of litter on our streets. Much of this litter ends up in the San Francisco Bay before heading into the Pacific Ocean.

On a high level, the Ordinance sets the following rules for Oakland food vendors:

- Restricts the distribution of single-use foodware accessories to customers;
- Requires food vendors to fill customer-provided reusable cups or containers for to-go orders;
- Bans the use of “compostable” plastic (also known as bio-plastic) foodware;
- Sets standards for the types of acceptable single-use foodware; and,
- Starting July 1, 2025, requires food vendors to use reusable foodware for dine-in service.

Each requirement is described in this letter. The City appreciates the steps your business will take to follow the Ordinance – efforts that will help safeguard Oakland’s environment and community from harmful pollutants.

Single-Use Foodware Accessories Provided to Customers Upon Request Only

Single-use foodware accessories – including single-use utensils, straws, condiment packets, and napkins – may be provided to customers upon customer request or at self-service stations only. Additionally, accessories are not allowed to be bundled together, that way customers can request and take only what they need. The rules apply to dine-in service, to-go orders, and food-delivery apps. For dine-in service, condiments must be provided in reusable containers or in bulk single-use containers.

The City has developed an “Accessories Upon Request” sign for businesses – to request a hardcopy, email recycling@oaklandca.gov or go to www.OaklandRecycles.com/Reusables to print and post.



Acceptable Single-Use Foodware – No “Compostable” Plastics Allowed

Single-use foodware must meet the following three standards:

1. Not be made of polystyrene foam (also called Styrofoam)
2. Not be made of “compostable” plastic (also called bio-plastic)
3. Be certified as free of harmful food-packaging chemicals.*

*If less than three options by foodware product type are available, this requirement does not apply for the specific foodware product type. Currently, no foodware product type has three certified vendor options. The City has a list of suggested single-use foodware that is free of harmful food-packaging chemicals– available at www.OaklandRecycles.com/Reusables. This list will be updated annually.



Reusable Foodware for Customers and Dine-In Service

For to-go orders, food vendors must fill customer-provided reusable cups and containers (when requested by customers) so long as the reusables are clean and can hold orders safely.

Beginning July 1, 2025, food vendors are required to serve food using all reusable foodware for dine-in service. Additional guidance regarding this requirement for food trucks and event food booths is available at www.OaklandRecycles.com/Reusables.



RESOURCES at: www.OaklandRecycles.com/Reusables (scroll down)

- Frequently Asked Questions
- Suggested single-use foodware list
- Free assistance and funding opportunities to make the switch to reusables!
- Accessories Upon Request Signage
- Bags to Bins container liner rules



If you have questions about the Ordinance or to request free assistance, please reach out to the City’s Recycling Hotline at recycling@oaklandca.gov or 510-238-SAVE (7283). Thank you for your continued partnership in helping to keep our beautiful Town clean, healthy, and resilient.