

ATTENTION

San Francisco Department of the Environment  
1455 Market Street, Suite 1200  
San Francisco, CA 94103



**SF Environment**  
Our home. Our city. Our planet.  
A Department of the City and County of San Francisco

Attention Retailers and Food & Beverage Vendors

January 30, 2019

**OFFICIAL NOTICE: NEW LAW TAKES EFFECT ON JULY 1, 2019**

The City and County of San Francisco passed the Single-Use Foodware Plastics, Toxics, and Litter Reduction Ordinance (File No. 181004), which will prohibit the sale and/or restrict the distribution of plastic foodware accessories and bans toxic fluorinated chemicals in compostable paper (or other plant fiber) foodware.

Single-use foodware is a significant contributor of litter, plastic pollution, ocean debris, and is difficult to compost or recycle in the City’s three bin system. In fact, single-use food and beverage packaging represents 67% of Bay Area street litter found to be entering the Bay and ocean.

For more resources and information about this ordinance and how to reduce the use of single-use foodware, visit: [SFEnvironment.org/reduceplastic](http://SFEnvironment.org/reduceplastic).

**RETAILERS:**

**Starting July 1, 2019**, retailers may not sell single-use plastic stirrers, plastic beverage plugs, plastic cocktail sticks or plastic toothpicks. **Starting January 1, 2020**, all compostable foodware sold in San Francisco, such as paper or other natural fiber to-go containers and straws, grease resistant paper, and paper plates, must be Biodegradable Products Institute (BPI) certified. Certified products are listed at [products.bpiworld.org](http://products.bpiworld.org).

**FOOD & BEVERAGE VENDORS:**

**Straw Restriction**

**Starting July 1, 2019**, distribution of single-use plastic straws is restricted, including compostable plastic straws. Acceptable single-use alternatives include natural fiber (e.g., paper). All acceptable single-use straws can only be made available upon request. A single-use plastic straw may only be provided to a customer who specifically requests a plastic straw to accommodate a disability or medical need.



**Plastic Accessories Ban**

**Starting July 1, 2019**, food & beverage vendors may no longer provide single-use plastic stirrers, plastic beverage plugs, plastic cocktail sticks, and plastic toothpicks. Acceptable single-use alternatives include natural fiber (e.g., paper, bamboo, wood etc.) and can only be made available upon request or in a self-service area.



### All Food and Beverage Accessories:

Starting July 1, 2019, automatically including food and beverage accessories in a customer's order for dine-in, take-out or delivery is prohibited. Acceptable single-use stirrers, beverage plugs, sleeves, lids, utensils, condiment packages, and napkins can only be made available upon request or in a self-service area.



### Compostable Foodware Criteria

Starting January 1, 2020, all compostable foodware such as paper or natural fiber to-go containers and straws, grease resistant paper, and paper plates must be BPI certified. Use only certified products listed at [products.bpiworld.org](http://products.bpiworld.org). Napkins, stirrers, splash sticks, cocktail sticks, toothpicks, or utensils made entirely of natural fiber like paper do not need to be BPI certified.



### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ)

#### How do businesses benefit from this law?

Food vendors can save by reducing the quantity of single-use straws and other foodware accessories that they purchase by providing these only upon customer request (including self-serve). Businesses who have voluntarily reduced the use of single-use foodware, such as by offering items only on request, have been shown to reduce purchase costs and refuse collection costs.

#### What kind of straws are acceptable in San Francisco?

Single-use paper or other natural fiber straws or reusable straws, such as glass, silicon, bamboo or metal are acceptable. Single-use paper or other natural fiber straws must be BPI certified by January 1, 2020. The ordinance specifically recognizes that businesses may need to provide single-use plastic straws to people with disabilities or medical needs upon request. Businesses should wait for a person to request a plastic straw before providing one. Compostable plastic straws (PLA) are prohibited because they act like conventional plastic in our environment if littered.

#### What is BPI certification and why is it being required?

BPI (Biodegradable Products Institute) is a third-party organization that certifies that products have been independently tested and verified as meeting scientifically based standards (ASTM) of being compostable in industrial facilities as in San Francisco's program. BPI certification is the only North American certification that ensures items entering the compost stream are truly and fully compostable. BPI certified products are free of noncompostable plastic and as of January 1, 2020, will be free of intentionally added toxic fluorinated chemicals.



**SF Environment**  
Our home. Our city. Our planet.  
A Department of the City and County of San Francisco



SFEnvironment.org  
(415) 355-3700

Printed on 100% post-consumer recycled paper.