



OFFICE OF THE
CITY ADMINISTRATOR



SF Environment

Requirements of San Francisco's Food Service Ware Ordinance

Effective June 1, 2007, food vendors and restaurants in San Francisco must use compostable or recyclable to-go containers. Polystyrene foam (Styrofoam™) disposable food service ware can no longer be used for food prepared in San Francisco.



There are many food service ware alternatives that can be composted or recycled by businesses or residents that can help reduce their trash volumes and service costs. Thousands of San Francisco restaurants and other businesses are recycling and participating in the food scrap and compostables collection program and as a result are getting discounts of up to 75% off their garbage service costs. Residents also have access to composting

and recycling collection services and can put compostable or recyclable food service ware in their green or blue carts.

San Francisco Department of the Environment (SF Environment) is available to assist businesses with finding suitable food service ware and can provide free on-site training and assistance to participate in the recycling and food scrap and compostables collection programs.

Examples of Acceptable Food Service Ware:

Compostable



Recyclable



For more information or to request assistance, visit SFEnvironment.org/foodservice or call **(415) 355-3700**, or **City's Customer Service 3-1-1**

SFEnvironment Our home. Our city. Our planet. SF Environment is a department of the City and County of San Francisco.



What You Need To Know About The Food Service Ware Law

What are the requirements of the new food service ware law?

- San Francisco food vendors are prohibited from using polystyrene foam (otherwise known as Styrofoam™) food service ware for food prepared and served in San Francisco, with no exceptions.
- All other disposable food service ware for food prepared and served in San Francisco must be compostable or recyclable unless there is no suitable product that is within 15% of the cost of non-compostable or non-recyclable alternatives. (There is no cost exemption for Styrofoam™).

Who has to follow the new food service ware law?

All San Francisco food vendors selling food prepared and served in San Francisco must use compostable or recyclable food service ware. Restaurants, delis, fast food establishments, vendors at fairs, food trucks, and all City facilities and contractors must follow this law.

What are the penalties for non-compliance?

Violations may result in fines: 1st time = warning, 2nd time = \$100, 3rd time = \$200, 4th or more time = \$500. Enforcement is by the City administrator and will be in part complaint-driven, meaning your customers may notify the City of violations, by calling **City Customer Service 3-1-1**.

What is wrong with polystyrene foam (Styrofoam™)?

Made from oil, polystyrene foam is non-renewable, non-biodegradable, and non-recyclable. Polystyrene foam food service ware ends up in landfills, waterways or the ocean. It can break into pieces, which are often mistaken for food and ingested by marine animals, birds, and fish. Medical studies suggest that chemicals in polystyrene foam can cause cancer and can leach into food or drinks.

What products are acceptable?

Compostable products include:

- Paper or other plant fiber, such as from sugarcane. Polyethylene film coating on paper is currently accepted, but not any foam coating.
- Corn or other plant-based bio-plastics such as “PLA” must be labeled “compostable”, meet compostability standards (ASTM D6400), and have a green band or green sticker to allow easy identification by the compostables collector, processor, and the public.

For a list of acceptable products visit **SFEnvironment.org/foodservice** or call **(415) 355-3700**.

Recyclable products include:

- Aluminum foil or trays and plastic containers and lids.

Not acceptable:

- Plastic wrap, Styrofoam™ or foam products.

What can you do to reduce food service ware waste?

Ask your current supplier about products that meet the City’s new requirements. Suppliers for compostable and recyclable products can be found at **SFEnvironment.org/foodservice** or call **(415) 355-3700** to request list of suppliers.

What can you do to reduce food service ware waste?

- Allow and encourage customers to bring their own mugs or reusable to-go containers for take-out by offering a discount.
- Charge customers a fee to cover any additional costs for disposable take-out containers.
- Use reusable service ware instead of disposable ones for eat-in customers.