
GUIDELINE FOR PLASTIC BAGS

Section 19 of the Packaging and Printed Paper Stewardship Regulation allows the Minister to establish written guidelines respecting requirements for a packaging and printed paper stewardship program and its operation including waste reduction and prevention targets that a program should be designed and operated to meet. Under the regulation guidelines may be established for:

- the management of waste packaging and printed paper,
- waste reduction and prevention targets,
- criteria for program performance evaluation, or
- any other matter provided for under the regulation.

Single-use plastic bags are defined as service packaging and are a designated material under section 2 of the regulation. The criteria, intended to reduce the use-of single-use plastic bags and reduce waste going to landfill are established as follows:

PURPOSE

- Manitoba's retail sector will work in partnership with the Manitoba Government, Manitoba municipalities, environmental and consumer organizations to address the environmental concerns associated with single-use plastic bags.
- Industry Stewards will work with the Manitoba Government and other key stakeholders to enhance consumer education and awareness to influence consumer choice to divert plastic bags from landfill and increase demand for plastic bag alternatives.
- Where plastic bags are chosen by the consumer, and not reused in the home, expanded in-store recycling opportunities will be developed with retail participants and through municipal recycling systems.

Industry Stewardship

- As part of Manitoba's overall program framework for Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) under the Packaging and Printed Paper Stewardship Regulation, industry stewards will promote alternatives to the use of plastic bags and increase the recovery and recycling of unwanted bags through in-store recycling opportunities and enhanced municipal recycling programs.
- A province-wide plan to address the environmental concerns associated with single-use plastic bags will be developed as part of the Packaging and Printed Paper Stewardship Program plan to be submitted to the Minister of Conservation within six months of the registration of the Packaging and Printed Paper Stewardship Regulation (PPPS Regulation).
- Industry Stewards will only supply single-use plastic bags to consumers that meet standards for being recyclable or bio-degradable.
- Bio-degradable plastic bags will be clearly labelled as such.

Waste Reduction and Prevention Target

- Through 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) strategies achieve a target of 50% reduction in the use of plastic bags within five (5) years of this guideline coming into force.
- Annual review of progress towards this target will be undertaken. Industry is expected to report on their distribution of plastic bags.

Program Plan

- Recognizing current industry and community efforts to reduce the use of and to recycle plastic bags and the role and responsibility among industry stewards and other stakeholders, the proposed plan is to include, but is not limited to the following actions:

Reduction:

- Measure and report on the use of single-use plastic bags in Manitoba annually.
- Evaluate the opportunity to reduce the number of single-use bags used through setting of minimum thickness guidelines.
- Increase promotion and availability of reusable bags as an alternative to single-use disposable plastic bags.
- Increase the amount of recycled content in plastic bags.
- Evaluate the use of bio-degradable bags and the need to increase their availability.
- Promote and implement incentives to encourage consumers to reduce demand for plastic bags.
- Promote and implement incentives to encourage consumers to use reusable bags.
- Promote and implement best practices for plastic bags by Manitoba retailers.

Recycling:

- Expand programs to encourage consumers to recycle plastic bags, including, in-store and municipal recycling services.
- Provide province-wide plastic bag recycling opportunities in stores that offer single-use plastic bags at check-out.

Education and Promotion:

- In partnership with the Manitoba Government and key stakeholders, launch an annual province-wide promotion and education program to encourage consumers to reduce the use of plastic bags, and to reuse and recycle bags already in circulation.

Litter Abatement:

- Establish a comprehensive litter reduction program for plastic bags.

Reporting and Monitoring:

- As part of the annual report of the Packaging and Printed Paper Stewardship Program, Industry Stewards will report annually on activities related to plastic bag reduction and use, take-back, recycling and recycled content.

Future Actions

- Additional actions to phase out the use of single use plastic bags as service packaging will be undertaken if the established waste reduction and prevention targets are not achieved.