

Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Law Information for Consumers

Plastic Bag Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Law—Article 27, Title 27 of the Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) requires larger retail stores, including most grocery stores, to make film plastic collection bins available so consumers can recycle their clean and dry film plastics. Smaller chain stores with 5 or more locations in New York State and 5,000 square feet of retail space are also subject to the law. Stores are required to make recycling collection bins available to consumers in visible, easily accessible locations.

Examples of Acceptable Film Plastics

- All-plastic shipping envelopes (labels removed)
- Air pillows for shipping (deflated)
- Bread bags
- Bubble wrap
- Cereal liner bags (if it tears like paper, do not include)
- Dry cleaning bags
- Furniture and electronic plastic wrap
- Garment bags
- Grocery bags
- Newspaper bags
- Plastic overwrap from paper products (paper towels, napkins, etc.)
- Produce bags
- Retail bags with string ties removed
- Stretch/shrink wrap
- Zip-top storage bags

Note: Any film packaging or bag with the “How2Recycle” label indicating “plastic film – store drop-off” can be returned to a store’s collection bin.



Examples of Unacceptable Materials

- Degradable/compostable bags
- Bags used for bottle returns
- Bottles
- Chip bags
- Frozen food bags
- Mesh bags
- Polypropylene or #7 “Other” film or bags
- Rigid food containers
- Salad mix bags
- Six-pack rings
- Snack/candy wrappers

Note: Bags labeled “COMPOSTABLE BAG – DO NOT PLACE IN RECYCLING BIN” should not be included in a film plastics collection/recycling bin.

Benefits of Film Plastics Recycling

- Properly recycling film plastics at a local retail recycling location allows for those film plastics to have a second life. They can be made into composite lumber and used in decks, benches, and playground sets. They can also be turned into pellets and used to make new bags, pallets, containers, crates, and pipes.
- Recycling film plastic reduces litter in our streets, parks, and waterways, and protects fish and wildlife.



How to Get Involved

- Recycle your film plastics regularly.
- Only recycle clean and dry film plastics.
- If your local store does not have a bin and is required by law to have one, speak with a manager; there could be some misunderstanding regarding the law and the store's obligations.
- Contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) if your local store will not participate in film plastics recycling and is required to do so.

For Questions or Assistance

- Contact DEC by phone at 518-402-8706 or by email at plasticbags@dec.ny.gov.
- Visit DEC at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/50058.html>.

The information above highlights the major provisions of the law and does not address all aspects of the law and the applicable 6 NYCRR Part 351 regulations. More information and a complete copy of the law and regulations are available on DEC's website at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/regulations/118810.html>.