

# Barrier bags ban design standard fact sheet

## April 2025

This fact sheet details the policy position of the Department of Water and Environmental Regulation for the design standard that will apply to prescribed plastic barrier bags in Western Australia (WA).

### What is banned and when?

1 September 2024

The sale and supply of non-compostable plastic produce bags (also known as barrier bags) for loose fruit and vegetables was banned.

1 September 2025

The sale and supply of non-compostable plastic barrier bags that do not meet the design standard used for loose/unpackaged meat, seafood and dairy products, as well as loose dry nuts and confectionery products, will be banned.

#### And

The sale and supply of compostable plastic barrier bags, as prescribed in the regulations, that do not meet the required design standards will be banned.



## Design standard

The design standard prescribes the required features of a compliant barrier bag and takes effect from 1 September 2025. Please note that this design standard does not apply to compliant plastic-free single-use barrier bags (such as those made with paper) or reusable barrier bags (such as mesh fabric bags).

Table 1 Required features

Composting certification	<p>The entire item, as representative of the final product, must be certified to the Australian composting standard AS4736-2006 or AS5810-2010.</p> <p>The type of ink and the rate of ink application must be represented in the certificate of conformance to the relevant AS composting certification.</p>
Bag colour	<p>Green tinting pigment can be applied to the bag film.</p> <p>No tinting pigment is also acceptable.</p>
Labelling requirements	<p>All barrier bags must display the seedling logo or home compostable logo issued by the Australian Bioplastics Association (ABA).</p> <p>The unique certification number should be displayed to demonstrate that the ABA has verified the product's compostability claims.</p>
Handles	<p>Barrier bags cannot have handles.</p>
Opacity	<p>The bag must not be opaque.</p>
Bag opening circumference	<p>Bags must have a minimum opening circumference of 740 mm* for loose fresh fruit and vegetables.</p>

Table 2 Recommended but **not** required features

Volume	<p>8 L volume is recommended.</p> <p>This volume recommendation supports the secondary use of a barrier bag as a kitchen caddy liner in households with access to kerbside FOGO collection, as most standard caddy bins are 6–8 L.</p>
Markings identifiable to FOGO processors	<p>Green tinting for the bag film or if no tinting pigment has been applied to the film, a green ink band printed across the body of the bag is recommended to aid FOGO processors in visual inspections to differentiate the bag from contaminating non-compostable plastics.</p> <p>Note that as per the requirements of the design standard outlined in Table 1, the composting certification must be representative of the full and final prescribed barrier bag.</p>

\*Note: that bag opening circumference requirement refers to the product specification as listed by the manufacturer. It excludes manufacturing tolerances that account for the small variation in the opening circumference within the barrier bag product.



# Frequently asked questions

## Why ban non-compostable barrier bags?

Prior to bans commencing, Western Australians used about 115 million barrier bags each year. Most end up in landfill, but many are littered in the environment, harming our wildlife. There are no current recycling options for barrier bags in WA, and conventional plastic barrier bags often contaminate recycling and food organics and garden organics (FOGO) collection streams. Contaminated streams, unfortunately, then end up in landfill.

## What has changed from the 1 September 2024 ban on barrier bags?

From 1 September 2025, the scope of the previous barrier bag ban will be expanded to include barrier bags for loose bulk dry goods, such as nuts and confectionery, and for loose/unpackaged meat, seafood and dairy products.

The 1 September 2025 ban will introduce a requirement for all barrier bags captured by the ban to be compliant with the requirements of the design standard.

## What is not included in the ban?

The following items are not included in the ban:

- compostable plastic barrier bags that have achieved an Australian industrial composting standard (AS4736-2006) or home composting standard (AS5810-2010) and adhere to the requirements of the design standard

- reusable barrier bags made from plastic fabric such as polyester or nylon
- plastic bread bags supplied by bakeries or for the sale of loose baked goods
- produce prepackaged off the premises (e.g. grape bags)
- bags sold on-shelf (e.g. packets of freezer bags)
- zip-lock plastic bags for packaging loose goods, such as sealable bags used for dry bulk foods, including loose nuts and confectionery.

## What alternatives are there?

Customers can bring their own reusable bags, or containers, or place loose produce directly into their basket. Retailers may provide disposable alternatives such as compliant compostable barrier bags, paper bags or boxes.

## Who will the ban apply to?

The ban applies to all businesses, manufacturers, retailers and distributors that sell or supply barrier bags for loose/unpackaged fruit, vegetables, nuts, confectionery, meat, seafood and dairy products in WA.

## What are the relevant Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) that apply to barrier bags as food packaging?

Find information on [food safety practices and general requirements for food packaging](#).



What other relevant regulations and standards that apply to food packaging can help in deciding which barrier bag to use?

### European Union Plastics Regulations

The Commission Regulation (EU) No 10/2011 outlines the requirements for plastics used for food packaging and provides rules to determine the compliance of plastic materials to this regulation. These regulations also impose 'Specific Migration Limits' and 'Overall Migration Limits' to ensure the safety of the food contact plastic material.

Other EU regulations relevant to food contact materials include Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004, which outlines the general principles of safety, and Regulation (EC) No 2023/2006, which sets out manufacturing process controls.

### US Food & Drug Administration (FDA) Food Contact Notification process

Section 409 of the *Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act* sets out the process for a food contact substance notification process. The FDA uses this process to regulate food contact substances, including packaging, to ensure the material is safe for the intended use.

### Where can I go for support?

The National Retail Association provides a range of services, including personalised advice and support, which are free and available to all impacted businesses (not just retailers):

- [Dedicated business with user-friendly information, resources and guides](#)
- Toll-free business advice hotline on 1800 817 723 or email [sustainability@nationalretail.org.au](mailto:sustainability@nationalretail.org.au)

For more information, visit [Western Australia's Plan for Plastics](#) or email our plastics team at [plastic-action@dwer.wa.gov.au](mailto:plastic-action@dwer.wa.gov.au)

