

New Plastic Bag Ban Takes Effect

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"A ban on plastic shopping bags has gone into effect in the city of Santa Monica, CA, impacting shoppers at supermarkets, convenience and liquor stores, as well as pharmacies. City officials say enforcement of the ban won't begin until September 1, allowing for a six-month grace period before penalties are levied. Fines will start at \$75 per violation, with criminal prosecution possible for repeat offenders.

According to watchdog group Heal the Bay, about 26 million single-use plastic shopping bags have been used each year in Santa Monica alone. California communities, the group says, spend nearly \$25 million each year to collect and dispose of plastic bag waste.

While Santa Monica's plastic bag ban is the most recent to go into effect, similar measures have won backing in other municipalities. Three communities in California and one in Texas have passed plastic bag bans this year. Nationwide, 19 plastic bag bans have been enacted or approved overall, beginning with San Francisco in 2007."

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