

## **RETAILER FACT SHEET**

### **City of Edwardsville Single Use Bag Fee**

City of Edwardsville Ordinance No. 6620-10-19 was adopted in October 2019 and places a 10-cent fee on all single use plastic and paper bags at retail establishments greater than 7,000 gross square feet in the City. This fee is intended to address the impact of single use bags in the community and encourage the use of reusable bags.

The fee does not apply to prescription bags or bags used in retail establishments for produce, bulk foods, meat, flowers, or baked goods, or any other bag used to protect a purchased item from damaging or contaminating other items.

Stores must record the number of bags provided and the total amount of single use bag fees charged on the customer's transaction receipt.

A record of the number of single use bags provided to customers and the total amount of fees charged on transaction receipts must be maintained.

### **Signage Requirements & Training**

The Ordinance requires that affected stores display a sign viewable by all customers at each entrance alerting them to the City of Edwardsville's Single Use Bag Fee.

Checkout area signage, also required, will be provided by the City of Edwardsville, with art files available for download on the retailer page at [www.cityofedwardsville.com](http://www.cityofedwardsville.com).

The website will also provide suggested language for stores that would like to create their own permanent signage.

Parking lot signs reminding customers to bring their reusable bags are strongly encouraged.

Training materials for cashiers, including recommended talking points, are also available on the website.

**City of Edwardsville Single Use Bag Fee  
Frequently Asked Questions**

**Q: Why are single use bags a concern in Edwardsville?** A: Plastic bags are produced from non-renewable resources, are very difficult to recycle (they cannot go in Edwardsville's yellow lid curbside bins), and contaminate recycling facility equipment. Plastic bags do not biodegrade, so they remain as litter in the environment. Paper bags are recyclable, but take a very large amount of water and energy to produce. The Single Use Bag Fee will help mitigate these problems by charging a fee to consumers that choose to use disposable bags.

**Q: When does the ordinance take effect?** A: The ordinance will take effect on April 1, 2020.

**Q: How much is the fee?** A: The fee is 10 cents per plastic or paper bag available at the checkout.

**Q: How does the bag fee work?** A: Beginning April 1, 2020 all retail establishments greater than 7,000 gross square feet in Edwardsville are required to charge 10 cents for every plastic or paper bag available at the point of sale such as the checkout. The retail establishments retain 100 percent of the fee. The fee will not be charged on non-handled bags used inside stores such as produce bags, bulk food bags, or bags used to wrap meat or fish. It also does not apply to newspaper bags, dry-cleaning bags, or bags provide by pharmacists.

**Q: What will the fee proceeds be used for?** A: Retail establishments will keep the total 10 cent fee to cover their costs complying with the ordinance, training employees, etc. The City of Edwardsville encourages retail establishments to provide reusable bags to the community.

**Q: What stores have to collect the bag fee?** A: The fee will only be charged at "retail establishments," defined in the ordinance as any retailer engaged in the retail sale of goods or merchandise with a floor area whose gross square footage is 7,000 feet or greater, which sells perishable or non-perishable goods, including, but not limited to, clothing, food and personal items, directly to customers. Retail establishment includes any supermarket, convenience store, shop, or service station.

**Q: How can I avoid paying 10 cents for a bag?** A: You can avoid paying the 10 cent fee by using your own bag that you bring with you to the store. You can also choose not to bag your purchase.

**Q: Has this type of ordinance been implemented elsewhere?** A: Yes! A regulation most similar to ours (a fee on both paper and plastic bags) was implemented in Boulder, Colorado in 2012 and has been very successful. Oak Park, Woodstock and Chicago are examples of cities here in Illinois that also have ordinances in place to reduce the use of single use bags. A listing of other communities with similar ordinances is available at <https://www.plasticbaglaws.org/>

**Q: Why not switch to biodegradable bags?** The goal of this ordinance is to reduce the use of single use bags in general, not to shift from one type of disposable item to another. Instead of providing an alternative disposable option, we want to encourage using reusable bags, therefore biodegradable bags are not exempt from the single use bag fee. In addition, many “biodegradable” bags do not properly break down in the local composting facilities, and do not break down at all in the landfill.

**Q: Why not charge the fee at all stores?** A: By applying the fee to the main source of single use bag consumption, large retailers, the ordinance will cost-effectively target a majority of bags in circulation.

**Q: Why don't we just promote recycling plastic bags?** A: Plastic bags are very difficult to recycle due to the limited aftermarkets for the material. They must be clean, dry, and placed in a collection container specifically for plastic bags. These containers are available at some grocery stores. They cannot be recycled in Edwardsville's single stream curbside program, and cause a lot of problems when residents put their recyclables in them. They clog the machinery that sort our recyclables, resulting in equipment shut-downs so that they can be removed by hand.

**Q: How will the fee impact the low-income population of Edwardsville?** A: The fee will not apply to anyone who participates in a federal or state food assistance program. City of Edwardsville staff is working with non-profits and government agencies such as the Goshen Market, Main Street Community Center and the GlenEd Food Pantry to distribute reusable bags.

**Q: Can I reuse disposable plastic and paper bags I already have?** A: Yes, the Single Use Bag Fee is only charged when a store provides a new plastic or paper bag to a customer at checkout. Customers are welcome to reuse disposable bags they already have.

**Q: Is the fee charged on smaller paper bags offered by grocery stores at the check-out?** A: Yes, the fee applies to all disposable plastic and paper bags used at the checkout, including paper bags that are smaller than the standard size.

**Q: Is banning bags a possibility?** A: The Carryout Single Use Bag Fee is a first step towards the goal of eventually moving away from disposable bag use in Edwardsville. The effectiveness of the fee will be monitored and other options may be evaluated in the future. We also waiting to see what position the State of Illinois takes in either banning or imposing a statewide single use bag fee.

## Cashier Question and Answer Quick Talking Points

### 1) What will the fee money be used for?

a. The full amount of the fee will be kept by the retail establishment to offset costs of complying with the ordinance, updating their software and for providing reusable bags to consumers.

### 2) What if a bag rips – do I have to pay for two?

a. No, accidents happen—you do not have to pay for the torn bag.

### 3) What should I put my trash in now?

a. While many people reuse bags, many do not, which is why the fee was put into place. Small trash bags are available at retailers or single use bags can be purchased at the checkout to be used for trash.

b. The fee does not apply to produce bags, newspaper bags, etc—so if you produce very little trash those bags could be used for that purpose.

### 4) Is this just in the city or the whole county?

a. The fee will only be charged at retail establishments greater than 7,000 gross square feet in the City of Edwardsville.

### 5) Can I reuse paper or plastic bags I already have at home?

a. Yes, the fee is only charged the first time a single use bag is given to a customer. Any bag can be brought to the store for reuse.

### 6) Why did the city do this?

a. A grassroots community group petitioned City Council to create a single use carryout bag ordinance in 2019 to reduce the disposable plastic and paper bags Edwardsville uses every year.

b. City Council decided a fee on both types of bags was the best option right now to reduce the bags used and retain customer choice, rather than a ban on certain bags.