

Single-Use Products Law

Tips and FAQs for Reusable Bags

Starting July 1, 2020, state law ([Act 69 of 2019](#)) prohibits stores and food service establishments from providing single-use plastic bags at the point of sale.

Follow these tips to reduce microorganisms on reusable bags. Remember that microorganisms, including bacteria and viruses, are all around us—on our skin, in our bodies, and on surfaces like doorknobs, counters, and phones. Most are neutral or even positive, but some can cause illness.

Safety tips for reusable bags:

- Bag your own groceries.
- If a store has temporarily banned reusable bags, consider putting your groceries back into your cart and bagging them at your car.
- Get in the habit of washing your bags, which is good protection beyond even that of COVID-19.

With practice, good bag hygiene can become part of your shopping routine:

CONTAIN: Place raw meat/fish/poultry packages into disposable plastic bags while you shop.

Plastic bags will help contain any juices that drip off packages, preventing contamination of other foods.

- Disposable bags are often available in the raw meat, fish, poultry, or produce areas of stores.
- Never reuse disposable plastic bags that contained raw meat, fish, or poultry.

SEPARATE: Pack meat/fish/poultry together in their own reusable bag at check-out.

CLEAN: Wash or sanitize your reusable bags often.



Cloth or mesh bags should be:

- Machine washed (it's fine to include them in a regular load of clothes or linens.)
- Dried in a dryer or air dried.



Nylon, polyester, or woven polypropylene bags should be:

- Machine washed (gentle cycle, cold water) or hand washed with soap and water.
- Air dried (they could be damaged in a dryer).



Nonwoven polypropylene or Plastic-lined (insulated) bags should be:

- Hand washed with soap and water.
- Air dried.
- OR wiped with disinfecting wipes, especially along seam lines.

STORE: Be thoughtful about where you store reusable bags.

- Before storing, make sure reusable bags are clean and completely dry.
- When possible, store bags in a cool, dry place.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Q: I read that reusable bags aren't safe to use due to COVID-19, is this true?

A: According to the [Vermont Department of Health](#), reusable bags are safe to use, even during the COVID-19 pandemic. Current evidence suggests that, while the novel coronavirus may persist for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials, it becomes inactive more quickly on surfaces made from fibers (like [cardboard](#) or cloth), than solid surfaces (like plastic or stainless steel). Although SARS-CoV-2 has not yet been tested on cloth, a [study](#) found that a different coronavirus persisted between 5 minutes and 24 hours on a cotton surface, depending on the concentration of the virus. The high concentration scenario was like a sick person sneezing directly onto a surface. It may be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. It is important to remember to wash your hands and avoid touching your face.

2. Q: Some stores have banned reusable bags, is this allowed?

A: Yes, stores are not required to allow customers to bring their own bags. After the single-use products law goes into effect on July 1, 2020, stores will be prohibited from providing single-use plastic bags at check-out and must charge 10 cents for each paper bag. If you would still like to use your reusable bags at a store that has banned them, you can put your groceries back in your cart at the checkout and put them into your bags at your car.

3. Q: Will the State delay the bag ban because of COVID-19?

A: ANR is not aware of any legislative action to modify the July 1, 2020 implementation date of the bag ban. If the implementation date is changed, we will update this document and our website ([VTrecycles.com](#)).