

Montgomery County, Maryland  
**DISPOSABLE BAG LAW**

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/BAG](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/BAG)

or Call 311



# SLOGAN AND WEBSITE

[www.montgomerycountymd.gov/BAG](http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/BAG)



**Bring Your Bag!**  
**Fight Litter**

# POSTER



**Starting January 1, 2012**

Retailers in Montgomery County who provide plastic or paper bags to customers are required to charge 5 cents a bag. Keep the change. Do yourself and the environment a favor – bring your reusable bag.



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or call 311

# OVERVIEW

- Effective January 1, 2012
- 5-cent charge on most carryout plastic and paper bags from County retailers (includes all municipalities)
- Must charge 5-cents for each bag. Retailer retains 1-cent

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

## Decrease the use of disposable bags in Montgomery County

- Increase consumer, retailer and retail employee awareness of new law
- Enable and motivate consumers to embrace the new law
- Ensure that retailers are prepared to implement bag law
- Prepare retail workers to effectively implement bag law
- Enlist cooperation and support of business and community organizations to educate and motivate all affected parties
- Educate consumers on environmental advantages of reusable bags

# WHY WE NEED A BAG LAW

- Montgomery County's new Carryout Bag Law is designed to improve our environment by reducing the number of bags that become litter
- Plastic bags are a significant source of litter
- They pollute our streets, streams, and playgrounds, and harm property values
- In fact, the biggest single source of litter in our streams is plastic bags
- Currently, the County spends \$3 million a year on litter clean up efforts

# WILL THE BAG LAW WORK?

- A similar program has been in effect in Washington, DC for the past 18 months
- DC's program has already reduced plastic bag litter that clogs rivers and streams in Washington DC by an estimated 65 percent

# HOW WILL THE FUNDS FROM THE BAG CHARGE BE USED?

- Montgomery County hopes we don't collect any money from the Bag Charge
- Residents can avoid the charge for carryout bags by bringing their own bag when they shop
- Proceeds from the Carryout Bag Law will go exclusively to programs that fight litter and provide stormwater pollution control

# WHAT STORES ARE REQUIRED TO CHARGE FOR BAGS?

Stores that provide bags to their customers to carry purchases out of the store:

- Grocery stores
- Service stations
- Food vendors
- Convenience stores
- Liquor stores
- Hardware
- Department stores
- Drug stores
- Other sellers
- Permanent booths

# WHAT OTHER PURCHASES DOES THE LAW COVER?

- The 5-cent charge applies to purchases made over the phone/Internet/fax when delivered in a carryout bag provided by the store
- The 5-cent charge applies to bags provided by the store at a self-checkout counter

# SOME BAGS ARE EXEMPT FROM THE BAG LAW

- Packaged bulk or perishable items
- Bags used to hold prescription drugs
- Paper bags from restaurants and delis for carry out, prepared or left-over food or drink
- Plastic bags in grocery stores used for produce
- Bags sold for initial use as yard waste bags, pet waste bags, garbage bags, dry cleaning bags or newspaper bags
- Bags provided by a seasonal stand or street fair stall, such as a farmer's market, yard sale or "occasional retailer" (defined in the law as "...a retail establishment that engages in the retail sale of goods no more than six days in any calendar year)

# WHAT DO RETAILERS NEED TO KNOW?

- A secure website will be set up for submission of the charge
- A retail establishment must record on the customer's transaction receipt the number of carryout bags that were provided to the customer and the total amount charge levied at a rate of 5 cents per bag
- On or before the 25th day of each month, each retail establishment must remit the full amount of the charges collected for all carryout bags provided to a customer during the previous month, at a rate of 4 cents per bag.
- Retailers are required to pay only after their cumulative revenue from bags exceeds \$100 (at least 2,500 bags paid for by customers)
- Information required for payment is the total number of bags paid for by customers and retailers' identity facts

## WHAT DO RETAILERS NEED TO KNOW? (continued)

- Retailers are not required to provide cash credit for bags that customers voluntarily bring to the store
- Retailers who provide a cash credit for bags can continue to do so purchases is not required in the Law.
- Under the law, retailers must charge customers for bags and may not provide a store credit to cover the bag tax amount

# WHAT ARE WE DOING TO EDUCATE RESIDENTS AND RETAILERS?

- Created website
- Created fact sheets and FAQ's for residents and retailers
- Created “kitchen cabinet” of large and small retailers to advise on most effective ways to reach out to businesses
- Informally canvassed consumers and front-line retail employees

# REACHING OUT TO RESIDENTS AND RETAILERS

- Major retailers
- Retail property owners and management firms
- Corporations with affinity for environmental issues
- Utilities
- Business associations and Chambers of Commerce
- Media outlets
- Environmental groups
- Education community (K-12 and higher ed)
- Umbrella community groups
- Multi-cultural outreach groups
- Low income outreach groups
- Senior organizations

# REACHING OUT TO RESIDENTS AND RETAILERS

(continued)

- Messaging and materials will vary based on target audience demographic
- Multi-lingual materials
- Dynamic website
- Social media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube)
- Media materials
- County email taglines
- Materials for retailers
- Materials for consumers and residents
- Consumer advertising on buses

# REACHING OUT TO RESIDENTS AND RETAILERS (continued)

## Public Events

- Campaign Kick-off in November
- Bag Distribution Days
- Green Friday

# REACHING OUT TO RESIDENTS AND RETAILERS (continued)

- MCPS involvement
- Canvass at high traffic retail areas and community events
- Coordinate with community and business partners
- Publicize at malls and shopping centers
- Information on 311

## Phase 5: Distribution of Bags to Lower Income Households and Seniors

- Seek counsel and coordinate with community partners for grassroots outreach
- Free bag distribution days throughout campaign
- First order of 30,000 bags now available
- DEP coordinates with Manna, other non-profit groups and multiple county agencies to distribute bags to targeted population
- Elected officials to participate in distribution

# REACHING OUT TO RESIDENTS AND RETAILERS (continued)

- Kitchen cabinet
- Direct mail (12,000 County retailers contacted)
- Two Webinars monthly to brief retailers (led by DEP and Finance)
- Messaging for association partners to send to membership
- Briefings for broad-reaching business groups
- Work with retail property owners, management companies to reach tenants
- Workshops for retailers

# REACHING OUT TO RESIDENTS AND RETAILERS (continued)

- Seek counsel of kitchen cabinet for most effective approach
- “Train the trainer”
- Countdown flyers in break rooms
- Provide check-out materials
- Coordinate with organized labor

# JANUARY OUTREACH

- Continue portions of education and outreach throughout January, including bus ads
- Consumers will have increased focus and interest after January 1

# GROUPS AND VOLUNTEERS CAN HELP GET THE WORD OUT ABOUT THE BAG LAW

- Handing out flyers at events
- Working with the County to reach out to lower income and senior residents
- Grassroots outreach to our culturally diverse communities
- Participating in “reusable bag distribution” days
- Putting posters and flyers at work or other locations
- Including messages to clients and community members through newsletters, circulars or listservs
- Educating County residents on disposable bag alternatives
- Hosting workshops to educate residents

# QUESTIONS?

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