

Seattle-

What should my food service business do?

- Stop using EPS foam food service products immediately.
- Stop using plastic straws and plastic utensils effective July 1, 2018.
- Use approved compostable food service packaging or recyclable packaging.
- Use approved compostable straws and utensils effective July 1, 2018.
- Provide recycle and compost bins for customer to use in dining areas.
- Provide recycle and compost bins for staff to use in kitchen and facility areas.
- Sign up for recycling and composting collection services.

Banned items

The foam ban, which bans expanded polystyrene (EPS, sometimes called “Styrofoam”), took effect January 1, 2009. The ban on non-recyclable and/or non-compostable disposable food packaging and service ware took effect July 1, 2010.

The straws & utensils ban, which bans plastic straws, spoons, forks, and knives is effective July 1, 2018. Food service businesses must use compostable straws and compostable utensils. For more information about these items see [Director's Rule SW-500.1](#).

Current exemptions to the packaging requirements

A temporary exemption is reviewed each year and is currently provided for a period of one year beginning July 1, 2018 and ending June 30, 2019; therefore, the requirement that all single-use food-service ware be either compostable or recyclable shall not apply to:

- Disposable long-handled thick plastic soda spoons when required and used for thick drinks and identified as non-compostable by the food-service business to its customers.
- Disposable flexible plastic drinking straws when needed by customers due to medical or physical conditions and for whom flexible compostable paper straws are unsuitable. Otherwise, straws must be compostable or designed to be reusable.
- Metal foil, metal foil-faced papers and engineered composite papers used to wrap hot food such as hamburgers and burritos.
- Portion cups (two ounces and under), if used for hot foods or requiring lids and identified as non-compostable by the food-service business to its customers.

• Enforcement

- It is illegal in the City of Seattle for any restaurant, café, grocery store, coffee shop, cafeteria or other food service business to sell or provide food, for consumption on or off premises, in expanded polystyrene (EPS “Styrofoam”) containers. Any person or business violating the ban on Styrofoam containers is subject to a civil penalty of up to \$250 for each violation. Food service packaging and serviceware must be recyclable or compostable in Seattle.
- Report businesses still using EPS foam containers to the Green Business Program at (206) 343-8505 or greenbusiness@seattle.gov.

