

A ban on polystyrene foam food & beverage containers goes into effect October 19, 2019 and applies to all food service businesses.



The Baltimore City Council passed an ordinance banning expanded polystyrene foam food containers in Baltimore City. Below are responses to a series of frequently asked questions. For further inquiries, please contact: sustainability@baltimorecity.gov.

Q: Does this ban apply to me?

A: The ban applies to the following food service facilities - including but not limited to:

- Cafes and delicatessens
- Coffee shops
- Convenience stores
- Discount and Dollar stores
- Fast food restaurants
- Food carts or trucks
- Full and limited-service restaurants
- Hospital cafeterias
- School cafeterias
- Congregation facilities
- Supermarkets and grocery stores

Q: What products are banned?

A: This new law prohibits the use of expanded polystyrene (EPS) foam disposable food-ware. Disposable food-ware includes cups, plates, bowls, trays, clamshell containers, take-away containers, or similar items used for serving food or transporting small amounts of prepared food. Any of the above disposable food-ware made of expanded polystyrene foam is prohibited.

Q: What products can I use?

A: Paper, plastic, aluminum, and compostable containers.

Q: What happens if I continue using EPS foam?

A: Fines start at \$200.

Q: Who will check if I am using EPS foam?

A: Compliance will be checked by the Health Department during regularly scheduled inspections.

Q: Why do I have to stop using EPS foam?

A: The purpose of this law is to reduce the amount of EPS foam waste entering the environment, landfills, and waterways.

Q: What is exempt?

A: This law does not apply to food or beverages that have been filled and sealed in EPS foam containers outside of the city before the food or beverages were received by a food service facility in the city. This law does not apply to materials used to package raw, uncooked, or butchered meat, fish, poultry, or other seafood for off-premise consumption.