

Edmonton's Single-use Item Bylaw: Best Practices for Charitable and Non-profit Organizations



Introduction

This document was developed with the help of representatives from local charitable and non-profit organizations to share best practices for reducing waste and complying with the City of Edmonton's [Single-use Item Reduction Bylaw 20117](#).

Find more information and tools by visiting edmonton.ca/SingleUse and clicking "Charities and Exemptions."

Disclaimer

This document is a description of various practices and strategies that have been or will be adopted by several charitable and non-profit organizations in their efforts to comply with the City of Edmonton's [Single-use Item Reduction Bylaw 20117](#). This document does not constitute legal advice with respect to Bylaw 20117 or any other applicable provincial or federal law.

Readers must independently take all necessary and prudent steps to ensure the equipment and practices adopted within their organization are in compliance with Alberta Health Services regulations, City Bylaws and all other applicable laws.

Alberta Health Services resources relevant to Bylaw 20117 obligations:

- [Safe use of reusables guiding document](#)
- [Food Retail and Foodservices Code](#)

Connect with the City of Edmonton

If your organization has questions or concerns regarding Bylaw 20117, please email SingleUse@edmonton.ca.



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Does your organization need reusable bags and/or reusable items?

[Sign up here](#) to be added to an online list of recipients of reusable item donations.

[edmonton.ca/SingleUse](#) > Charities and Exemptions

Reusable Bags

Here are a few ways to reduce the cost of providing reusable bags

1. Pick up free bags from the [Reuse Centre](#) or any [Goodwill location](#).
2. Establish a Take a Bag,/Leave a Bag system, and display the "[Take a bag/leave a bag](#)" poster. Learn more on our [Charities and Exemptions](#) page.
3. If you accept reusable bag donations, set up a station in your facility and display the "[Donate a bag](#)" poster.
4. Look for a free reusable bag sewing workshop to attend in the community or sometimes offered by the [Reuse Centre](#).
5. Check out [Boomerang Bags #YEG](#) for free reusable bags, reusable bag sewing events, or to pick up their own reusable bag DIY kit

TIP: Arrange to pick up a pallet load of free reusable bags from [Goodwill's Impact Centre](#) (if available).

Contact 780-944-0242 to inquire of availability and to make arrangements **at least one week in advance.**

Getting Clients to Use Reusable Bags

Here are a few tips to provide to clients so they can avoid single-use bags

Food Hampers

To reduce single-use bags used for food hampers, email clients who use these services and remind them to bring their reusable bags, boxes or totes.

Grocery Deliveries

To avoid the bag fee, inform clients who depend on grocery delivery to ask their preferred store if they offer these options:

- Let customers use their own bags
- Request cardboard or reusable boxes when ordering online, if applicable
- Deliver items in paper bags

Avoiding Bag Fees in Grocery Stores

For clients who shop in-store, they may avoid bag fees by packing their groceries in free store-provided cardboard boxes, often located near the checkout area.

- If boxes are not readily available, clients may wish to inquire at Customer Services if any available boxes are in the back

Reusables and Safe Food Handling

Sustainable Foodware

Here are cost-effective ways to use fewer single-use cups, plates and utensils in your operations.

1. For staff meetings and events, purchase reusable dishes or ask staff to bring their own reusable items.
2. Consult the City of Edmonton's [Guide to Sustainable Cups, Containers and Cutlery](#) to select the appropriate sustainable foodware for your organization.

TIP: The City of Edmonton's [Food Serviceware Supplier List](#) can help you find a supplier.

The City of Edmonton's [Reuse Directory](#) can show you where to find thrift and second hand stores offering low cost, gently used reusable foodware.

Handling Clients' Reusable Cups

Best practice is to avoid touching the cup completely and pour the drink directly into the cup.

If touching the client's cup can't be avoided:

1. Inspect the cup to confirm it is clean.
Do not accept dirty cups.
2. Ask clients to remove the lid.
3. Handle the cup by the base; do not touch any areas that would contact the customer's mouth.

Optional: Rinse the cup in hot water from a sink not used for hand washing.

4. Fill and return the cup and wash hands before returning to other duties.

Handling Reusable Foodware

How to handle clients' reusable foodware after use

1. Wear gloves when possible to handle clients' foodware after use.
2. If gloves are not an option, avoid touching any areas that came into contact with clients' mouths.
3. Transport items to the dishwasher or sink immediately after use for washing, sanitizing and drying according to AHS regulations.
4. Wash hands before returning to other duties.

Reusable Containers *(not required by the bylaw)*

This optional practice is a great way to save money on disposable containers and reduce waste.

If clients wish to take leftovers home in their own containers, **the containers must be visually clean, in good condition and food-grade.**

- Clients should transfer the leftovers into their containers at their tables.
- Do not take clients' containers into the food preparation area.

Choosing a Dishwashing System

If you do not already have an established dishwashing system on site, the following methods are options to consider implementing to incorporate reusables into your operations safely.

Refer to the [Food Regulation and Food Retail and Food Service Code](#) to determine required equipment and steps.

Items can be cleaned on-site, or you can work with a company that provides, collects, washes and sanitizes reusable cups and/or containers, if/when this service becomes available. (To our knowledge, no such service yet exists in Edmonton.)

1. Wash dishes by hand using the three or two sink dishwashing method.

- Alberta Health Services has printable posters showing how to use the [three sink method](#) and the [two sink method](#).
- Wash cups, dishes and utensils separately from kitchen equipment.
- Use a different cloth/scrubber to wash reusable dishes and utensils. Using a different color so you do not confuse the cloths is also helpful.

2. Rent or purchase a commercial dishwasher.

- Small models are available; many fit under a counter.
- You may be able to rent a dishwasher from a chemical manufacturer if you commit to buying their dish cleaning/sanitizing chemicals. This can often result in a lower cost.

Cutlery Loss Prevention

Reusable cutlery is more cost-effective if it is used many times.

To help ensure your cutlery is returned:

- Offer incentives, like a granola bar, for each item returned.
- Inscribe or mark cutlery so it is clear who owns it and establish an inventory management system.
- Budget for a certain percentage of loss and replacement.

For schools or daycare centres:

- Make it a game: create a chart to track when children return all of their cutlery to see who the weekly winner will be!
- Count cutlery after the kids consume food.
- After counting, use internal communication to help locate missing items (ask staff to check classrooms and children's bags)

Check the [Guide to Sustainable Cups, Containers and Cutlery](#) for other more sustainable options.

Storing Reusables

How to safely use reusable items and extend their useful life

- Ensure reusables are properly washed and sanitized according to [Alberta Health Services](#) guidelines, and completely dry before storing.
- Ensure clean and sanitized containers are stored appropriately to protect them from contamination.

TIP: Store each client's or staff's items in separately labeled containers, or

TIP: Individually label each client's or staff's items and store them separately as sets.

Signage

Post information about the bylaw in a highly visible location can help clientele understand the shift in your operations.

Using City-branded resources can help clarify that these changes are required by a bylaw and reduce confusion or frustration directed towards your staff.



[City of Edmonton Reusable Bag Poster](#)

[City of Edmonton Donate a Bag Poster](#)



[City of Edmonton Acceptable Donated Bags poster](#)



If clients have questions, direct them to edmonton.ca/SingleUse, [Charities and Exemptions](#).