



OFFICE OF THE  
CITY ADMINISTRATOR



SF Environment

## New Law Promotes Healthier San Francisco and Can Improve the Bottom-Line for Restaurants and Food Vendors

**Effective June 1, 2007, food vendors and restaurants in San Francisco must use compostable or recyclable to-go containers. Polystyrene foam (Styrofoam™) disposable food service ware can no longer be used for food prepared in San Francisco.**



There are many food service ware alternatives that can be composted or recycled by businesses or residents that can help reduce their trash volumes and service costs. Thousands of San Francisco restaurants and other businesses are recycling and participating in the food scrap and compostables collection program and as a result are getting discounts of up to 75% off their garbage service costs. Residents also have access to composting

and recycling collection services and can put compostable or recyclable food service ware in their green or blue carts.

San Francisco Department of the Environment (SF Environment) is available to assist businesses with finding suitable food service ware and can provide on-site training and assistance to participate in the recycling and food scrap and compostables collection programs.

### Examples of Acceptable Food Service Ware:



For more information or to request assistance, visit [SFEnvironment.org/foodservice](http://SFEnvironment.org/foodservice) or call **(415) 355-3700**, or **City's Customer Service 3-1-1**

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# What You Need To Know About New Food Service Ware Law

## What are the requirements of the new food service ware law?

- San Francisco food vendors are prohibited from using polystyrene foam, otherwise known as Styrofoam™, food service ware for food prepared and served in San Francisco, with no exceptions.
- All other disposable food service ware for food prepared and served in San Francisco, must be compostable or recyclable unless there is no suitable product that is within 15% of the cost of non-compostable or non-recyclable alternatives. (There is no cost exemption for Styrofoam™).

## Who has to follow the new food service ware law?

All San Francisco food vendors selling food prepared and served in San Francisco must use compostable or recyclable food service ware. Restaurants, delis, fast food establishments, vendors at fairs, food trucks, and all City facilities and contractors must follow this law.

## What are the penalties for non-compliance?

Violations may result in fines: 1st time = warning, 2nd time = \$100, 3rd time = \$200, 4th or more time = \$500. Enforcement is by the City administrator and will be in part complaint-driven, meaning your customers may notify the City of violations, by calling (415) 554-4851.

## What is wrong with polystyrene foam (Styrofoam™)?

Made from oil, polystyrene foam is non-renewable, non-biodegradable, and non-recyclable. Polystyrene foam food service ware ends up in landfills, waterways or the ocean. It can break into pieces, which are often mistaken for food and ingested by marine animals, birds, and fish. Medical studies suggest that chemicals in polystyrene foam can cause cancer and can leach into food or drinks.




## What are approved food service ware products?

### Compostable products include:

- Paper or other plant fiber, such as from sugarcane, rice, or bamboo. Polyethylene film coating on paper is currently accepted, but not any foam coating.
- Corn, soy, potato or other plant starch based bio-plastics, such as "PLA" clear plastic, that are labeled as "compostable" and meet compostability standards (ASTM D6400). These products should be marked with a green band, stripe or sticker to allow compostable identification by the compostables collector and processor.

These products are described at [SFEnvironment.org/foodservice](https://www.sfeenvironment.org/foodservice) or call (415) 355-3700 to request product list.

### Recyclable products include:

- Aluminum foil or trays and   and  plastic containers and lids.

## Where can alternative food service ware products be purchased?

Ask your current supplier about products that meet the City's new requirements. Suppliers for compostable and recyclable products can be found at [SFEnvironment.org/foodservice](https://www.sfeenvironment.org/foodservice) or call (415) 355-3700 to request list of suppliers.

## What can you do to reduce food service ware waste?

- Allow and encourage customers to bring their own mugs or reusable to-go containers for take-out use and offer a discount when customers bring their own food service ware.
- Charge customers a fee to cover any additional costs for disposable take-out containers.
- Use reusable service ware instead of disposable ones for eat-in customers.

For more information please visit [SFEnvironment.org](https://www.sfeenvironment.org) or call (415) 355-3700, or City's Customer Service 3-1-1

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