

Edmonton's Single-use Item Bylaw: Best Practices for Restaurants



Introduction

This document was developed with the help of local restaurants to help share best practices for procurement, operating procedures and training to comply with the City of Edmonton's [Single-use Item Reduction Bylaw 20117](#).

Find more information and tools for businesses at edmonton.ca/SingleUse under Businesses and Events.

Disclaimer

This document is a description of various practices and strategies that have been or will be adopted by several large quick-service restaurant (QSR) 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 restaurant 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](#)
- [Alberta Health Services Business Page](#)

Connect with the City of Edmonton

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



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Section 1: Getting Ready

Who's responsible?

Is your business a franchise? If so, determine who in your organization is responsible for inventory and equipment before making any purchasing decisions.

- Typically, the franchise corporation is responsible for identifying and selecting the type of reusable cups and dishwashing systems for restaurants.
- The franchisee is often responsible for the costs associated with purchasing the cups and installing the dishwashing system.

1. Choosing Restaurant Cups

Refer to the list of [Food Serviceware Providers](#) for help finding a supplier.

- Consider drink types and sizes when determining appropriate reusable cups.
 - Think about how to minimize the number of reusables on-site while still meeting corporate and customer satisfaction.
 - Cups with markings for small, medium and large drink volumes can reduce the amount of cups required on site.

2. Choosing a Dishwashing System

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 in Edmonton.

Choosing a dishwashing system

- 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 often results in lower costs when compared to purchasing.
- Wash dishes by hand using the three sink dishwashing method.
 - Alberta Health Services has a [printable poster](#) showing how to use the three 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.

3. Cup Storage

Dine-in Cups

- Determine how much space you need, or what storage/display options may be available to you. Some restaurants need infrastructure to support three types of cups (single-use cups for takeout, reusables for hot and cold).
- Consider how much space you need for collection of the cups: display/storage to offer customers at the front of house, return bins located near trash bins, and space for cleaning/sanitizing and storing at the back of house.
- Place branded reusable cups on the counter, or in a display case behind the counter, so they are more visible to customers.



4. Digital Platforms and Delivery Apps

Asking what the customer needs can save money in the long run.

- Ensure any online ordering platform(s) your company uses provide customers with:
 - The option to refuse a bag (and the fee).
 - The option to bring their own reusable cup for orders to go.
 - Itemized requests on the platforms for napkins, straws, utensils and condiments (e.g. + and - beside utensils, straws, condiment packets, napkins, etc.).
 - Ensure utensils/place settings are set to zero as a default, allowing customers to opt in to the items they require and preventing them from being sent out automatically.



5. Signage

Posting information about the bylaw in a highly visible location can help ensure customers know what to expect before they order.

- Using City-branded resources can help clarify that these changes are required by a bylaw.
 - [City of Edmonton bylaw overview poster](#) combines all aspects of Bylaw 20117 into one sign.
 - [More City of Edmonton resources](#), including printable posters for staff and customers.
- Signage can help reduce customer complaints.

Section 2: Staff Training

Help prepare your staff by educating them on the bylaw and your restaurant's specific practices.

Here's what they need to know:

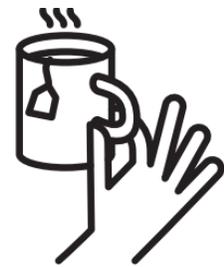
1. Staff need to ask customers if they want a bag, every time—even in the drive-thru.

- If they want a bag, the charge needs to appear on their receipt: 15 cents per paper bag and \$1 per new reusable bag. (These fees will increase to 25 cents per paper bag and \$2 per new reusable bag on July 1.)
- Asking this question gives customers the option to save on the fee, and prompts them to consider whether or not they actually need a bag.



2. Restaurants are expected to serve all dine-in drinks in the restaurant's reusable cups.

- However, if the customer requests a single-use cup, the employee can provide one.
- They need to understand your restaurant's procedure for washing and storing clean and dirty cups (see [best practices in this document](#)).



3. Staff need to follow your restaurant's policy and procedure for accepting customers' reusable cups (see [best practices in this document](#))

4. Staff need to ask customers if they want straws, napkins, condiment packets or utensils.

- They should not assume the customer wants these items, even for takeout orders.
- Note that the bylaw does not require a fee to be charged for these items.

5. Staff should understand that single-use items are restricted due to a City bylaw, not because of direction from your business.

- They can direct customers to edmonton.ca/SingleUse if they have questions.

Section 3: Operational Best Practices

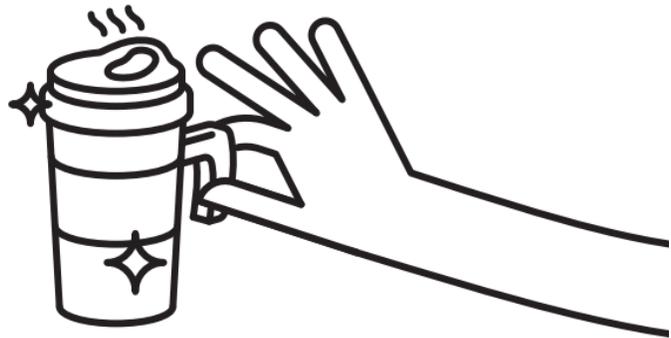
1. Cups

Restaurants are expected to serve dine-in drinks in reusable cups, and have a policy for accepting customers reusable cups. The following practices could be adapted for your policy.

Filling customer cups behind the counter

Best practice is to completely avoid touching the customer's cup.

If possible, use one of the restaurant's reusable cups or containers to hold and transfer the drink, or pour the drink directly into the customer's cup without touching it.



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

- Inspect the cup to confirm it is clean. Do not accept dirty cups
- Ask the customer to keep the lid, and place their cup on the counter.
- Optional: Rinse the cup in hot water from a sink not used for hand washing.
- Fill the cup and return it.
 - Beverage machines with pre-programmed buttons help keep the cups from coming into contact with the machine.
- Wash hands before returning to other duties.

Accepting customer cups in the drive-thru (*not required by the bylaw*)

- Take the cup and ask the customer to keep the lid.
- Optional: Rinse the cup in hot water from a sink not used for hand washing.
- Fill the cup and return it.
- If it's a hot beverage, ask the customer to secure the lid for safety.
- Wash hands before returning to other duties.

Self-serve fountain drinks

In all scenarios, customers should avoid touching the lip of the cup to the machine.

Displaying the City's [fountain drink poster](#) may help.

- Customer cups
 - Give the customer a clean restaurant reusable cup.
 - Ask the customer to fill the restaurant's cup at the fountain, then transfer the drink to their own cup.
- Restaurant-owned cups
 - Give the customer a clean restaurant reusable cup.
 - Provide a new cup for each refill.



Reusable containers (*not required by the bylaw*)

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

Provide food to the customer. If possible, place it on a reusable restaurant dish instead of in wrapping, to reduce waste.

- Customer then transfers food from the dish to their container.
- Do not take customer containers or bags into the food preparation area.

2. Customer Bags

Ask customers if they would like to purchase a paper bag.

If the customer declines a bag, tell them how their food will be passed to them.

Drive-thru

- Staff member puts food on a tray and passes the tray to the customer in their car.
- The customer takes the food and returns the tray to the drive-thru staff.
- Sanitize the tray after each use.
- Wash hands before returning to other duties.

Takeout/Delivery

- Ensure your online ordering system has a “no bag required” option.
- Place the order on a tray and allow the customer/delivery driver to place food in their bag or container.