



Disposable Foodware Ordinance Purchasing Guide

PLASTIC STRAWS, UTENSILS, STIRRERS, AND OTHER SMALL PLASTIC ITEMS ARE NO LONGER ALLOWED IN PALO ALTO.

Use this guide to choose alternatives that comply with the ordinance.

Best: Reusable Foodware

Palo Alto's long-term plan is to require the use of reusable foodware. Using reusables conserves natural resources, prevents waste and litter in our watersheds and oceans, and can save your business money. **Free technical assistance is available** to help you switch to reusables.



Better: Plant Fiber & Wood

- Wood-based chopsticks, utensils, stirrers
- Paper straws
- Hay straws/stirrers



Okay: Compostable Plastics

- Products that meet ASTM D6400 or D6868 standards for compostability
- BPI-certified* compostable plastics
- BPI-certified* utensils



Avoid:

Avoid products that are NOT labeled **COMPOSTABLE** and/or carry unsubstantiated claims. These claims **DO NOT** mean the product is compostable:

- Made from plants
- Green
- Environmentally friendly
- Biodegradable
- Degradable
- Will decompose
- Photodegradable
- Made from corn starch
- Bio-based

* **BPI CERTIFIED** Look for this logo to know if the product you are purchasing has been tested and certified by the Biodegradable Products Institute.



COMPOSTABLE
BPI | US COMPOSTING COUNCIL



Disposable Foodware Ordinance Requirements

Banned Disposables

BANNED disposable foodware includes:

Plastic utensils, straws, stirrers, drink plugs, and other small plastic foodware items.

Who is affected:

All food service establishments will be affected. This includes restaurants, bars, delis, grocery stores, food trucks, hotels, convenience stores —anyone serving food in Palo Alto.



New Requirements

- Use only **reusable** or **compostable** utensils, straws, stirrers, drink plugs, and other small foodware items. Compostable items must be acceptable in the City's compost collection program.
- Offer compostable items only **upon request** or via a **self-serve station**.



Tips & Resources

- Want to skip disposables and switch to reusable foodware? Contact Zero Waste Palo Alto for more information.
- Before purchasing items, check with GreenWaste of Palo Alto to confirm that the products you have selected are acceptable in the City's compost program. Contact GreenWaste at (650) 493-4894 or pacustomerservice@greenwaste.com.
- Simplify sorting and reduce contamination by using as many reusable foodware items as possible, and then if using any disposables, use only compostable options.
- Provide convenient, color-coded waste stations with signage.