

# Best Option

Reusable



# Great Option

Compostable Fiber



# Not Allowed

Styrofoam,  
Nonrecyclable plastic,  
Plastic Straws and Strirrers



## FAQ's

**What is the Richmond Food Ware Ordinance?**  
The ordinance helps keep polystyrene foam and small plastics out of streets, storm drains, and bodies of water. It aligns with Richmond's Climate Action Plan goal to reduce waste and support recycling and composting efforts.

**Can I put compostable fiber in my green bin?**  
Yes - Since 2010 Richmond residents and businesses have had the option to subscribe to organic waste collection services. This reduces garbage cost and produces sustainable compost!

**Is food ware made of compostable plastic accepted?**  
Yes - If the item complies with the Food Ware Ordinance's definition of "compostable." Straws or stirrers of any type of plastic are not permitted. Please review the ordinance for more information.

**Is recyclable plastic food ware accepted?**  
Yes - If the item complies with the Food Ware Ordinance's definition of "recyclable." Straws or stirrers of any type of plastic are not permitted. Please review the ordinance for more information.

**Are there any exemptions to the ordinance?**  
Yes - Please review the ordinance for more information.

**Do the alternatives cost more than Styrofoam™ or plastic?**  
Often, yes - Styrofoam™ is the cheapest, but causes environmental impacts. Existing paper and recyclable food ware products can be similar in price. A food provider may charge customers a "take-out fee" to cover the extra cost.



## FOOD WARE ORDINANCE GUIDE

To read the full Food Ware Ordinance (RMC 9.17), visit [www.richmondenvironment.org](http://www.richmondenvironment.org)



City Manager's Office  
450 Civic Center Plaza, 3rd Floor  
Monday-Friday, 8:30 am to 5:00 pm  
(510) 620-5407



## Environmental Impact

Food Ware such as straws, utensils, and cups, that are not reusable or fiber-compostable create tons of avoidable trash. It negatively impacts our natural and marine environment both locally and globally.

**500  
Million**

tons of plastic straws used in the U.S. every day.

**71%**

of seabirds have been found with plastic in their stomachs.

**2050**

It is estimated that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish.

Source: National Geographic, 2017

## Acceptable Food Ware Options

### Acceptable Food Ware Materials:

- Reusable (metal, glass, ceramic)
- Paper or Plant Fiber (sugarcane, bamboo, rice)
- Composed entirely of aluminum
- Pasta
- Wood
- Recyclable or compostable plastic (Except for straws and stirrers)



## Definitions

**Compostable:** Any product capable of composting and labeled in accordance with California Law, or is consistent with American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) international standards D6400 and D6868 for compostable plastics.

**Disposable Food Ware:** Bowls, plates, trays, cartons, cups, lids, utensils, or other items designed for one-time use for prepared foods.

## Compliance

**The ordinance is applicable to all food and retail establishments including but not limited to:**

- Restaurants, bars, cafes
- Food vendors and cafeterias
- Shops, hardware stores, department stores

**Business that do not comply with the Food Ware Ordinance are subject to an Administrative Citation.**

## What Are the Rules?

### NEW – Effective December 15, 2018

- Bans the sale and use of all plastic straws and stirrers by retail establishments, food providers, and lodging establishment. Non-plastic alternatives may be provided by food provider upon customer request.
- Adds utensils and lids to the list of disposable food ware which must be compostable or recyclable.

### Current Rules:

- Prohibits the sale and rental of products comprised entirely or primarily of polystyrene foam (Styrofoam) by retail establishments.
- Requires all food providers to use recyclable, compostable or reusable food ware. Allows food providers to charge a “take-out fee” to customers.



Example of paper straws