



SINGLE-USE PLASTIC STRAWS FAQs

WHAT IS THE NEW LAW REGARDING PLASTIC STRAWS?

The following regulation was passed to reduce single-use straws that contribute to marine debris and other litter:

- Assembly Bill (AB 1884)
 - ✓ This regulation is applicable throughout the State of California

WHAT ARE THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW REGULATIONS?

The provisions of the new regulations do not ban or prohibit the use of single-use plastic straws.

The provisions simply prohibit food service businesses from automatically providing single-use plastic straws to consumers.

- AB 1884 prohibits full-service restaurants in California from providing single-use plastic straws to the consumer unless requested by the consumer.

WHO ENFORCES THE PROVISIONS OF THE NEW REGULATION?

The provision is enforced by the Merced County Division of Environmental Health Division (MCDEH) as part of the routine inspection and complaint investigation of food service businesses.

WHAT ARE SINGLE-USE PLASTIC STRAWS?

Single-use plastic straw means a single-use, disposable tube made predominantly of plastic derived from either petroleum or a biologically based polymer, such as corn or other plant sources, used to transfer a beverage from a container to the mouth of the person drinking the beverage.

NOTE: Single-use plastic straw does not include a straw made from non-plastic materials, including, but not limited to, paper, pasta, sugar cane, wood, or bamboo.

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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A FOOD SERVICE BUSINESS AND A FULL-SERVICE RESTAURANT?

A food service business means any business in a permanent or mobile location that sells food and/or beverages. Examples include, but not limited to the following:

- Restaurants (such as fast food, coffee shops and juice bars)
- Bars
- Convenience stores
- Food carts and food trucks
- Temporary food facilities (such as those participating in fairs or events)

A full-service restaurant means a food service business where all of the following actions are taken by an employee of the establishment:

- The consumer is escorted or assigned to an assigned eating area.
- The consumer's food and beverage orders are taken after the consumer has been seated at the assigned seating area.
- The food and beverage orders are delivered directly to the consumer.
- Any requested items associated with the consumer's food or beverage order are brought to the consumer.
- The check is delivered directly to the consumer at the assigned eating area.

WHEN ARE FOOD OPERATORS REQUIRED TO COMPLY WITH THE NEW REGULATION?

Effective January 1, 2019, food service business operators are required to comply with the provisions of AB 1884.

Effective January 1, 2019 through December 31, 2019, the MCDEH will provide education and training on the requirements of the new regulations to food service business operators during inspection.

Effective January 1, 2020, non-compliance may result in notices of violation and \$25 fines for each day the business is in violation, but not to exceed \$300 annually.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

Contact the MCDEH Consumer Protection Program at 209-381-1100 or FoodProgram@countyofmerced.com for additional information.